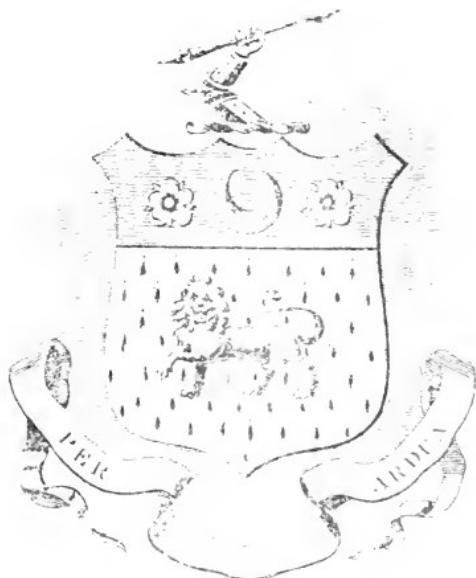




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Ferdinand H. Langh





B E L L E G A R D E,

THE

ADOPTED INDIAN BOY.

A CANADIAN TALE.

A quoi bon vous mettre en courroux
Si vous reconnaissiez vos traits dans quelque fable ?
Il n'est en pareil cas qu'un parti raisonnable ;
Ne dites mot :—corrigez vous.

LE BAILLY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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B E L L E G A R D E.

CHAPTER I.

Speak, stranger, what your wants ; here
Shall you find all that becomes a house
Like this ; warm baths, refreshment
Of your toils ; the well-spread couch,
Inviting soft repose ; and, over all,
An eye regarding justice.

ÆSCHYLUS.—*Coephora*.

IT was into one of these new towns, that Eustace was conducted a prisoner of war ; and the large wooden building where he alighted, was a tavern, where “the select men of the parish”

were assembled, to discuss such matters as related to the commonwealth. They were seated round a large table, on which were tin goblets, a large pitcher of water, and a bottle of strong rum, distilled from molasses. The officer of whom we have already spoken, who commanded the position carried by Eustace on the day of the battle, was walking up and down the room, apparently indifferent to the matters under the consideration of these chosen members of the city. He instantly recognized Eustace; but with that reserve common to his countrymen, took little notice of him. The president, or, as he is called, "the moderator," of the meeting, rose to receive the prisoner and his escort. Being, at the same time, an elder of the church, and a judge of the County Court of Sessions, he was looked up to as "a pretty clever kind a man in these parts." The leader of the party

that had taken Eustace, Brother Jonathan Chase, was sheriff of the district, town clerk, and captain of a company of militia. He was one of the early settlers, in consequence of certain debts that he could not pay in his native town; and a love of freedom, that made him uneasy under the restraints of law and authority that were not of his own making.

He marched up towards the table, and handed forward his prisoner, with as much coolness as if he had presented one of the many wild deer he had slain in his early excursions.

“Mister Moderator,” said he, “I have caught this here Briton t’other side the lake. I guess he’s one i’ them there chaps as are gathering in Canada to make us slaves.”

The moderator pulled a quid of tobacco from his mouth, and laid it before him; and without raising his eyes, or showing the least sign of

emotion, simply answered—"I expect so, brother Chase."

Then collecting all his importance into his shrewd physiognomy, he called out—"Silence, gentlemen!" and thus commenced the examination :—

"I expect, mister," addressing himself to Eustace, "you know who I be?"

"I have not that advantage, sir; you are, perhaps, the chief magistrate of the town?"

"Pretty well to pass, mister, at your service. You be a Briton, I expect, Mister?"

"I have the honour to serve in the British army, sir; I am a captain in his Majesty's tenth regiment of foot."

"Hem! I guess you be."

"You may be quite sure of it, sir; I can have no motive to conceal my condition."

"May be so bold, mister, as to ask if you

know how the Britons treat our folks when they lay hold on 'em?"

"I have not had an opportunity of knowing, sir, not having had the care of any prisoners of war."

"Well then, I'll tell ye, mister—but, first, your name, if ye please?"

"Eustace De Courcy, sir."

"An odd kind a name, mister. Put that down, Deacon Cummins," said he, addressing himself to an old, grey-headed man, who was clerk of the parish.

"Ha'n't you got none of our folks at that 'ere place where ye were caught, mister?"

"There are no prisoners at Chambly, sir."

"Pray where be them as was taken when they fit with your red coats at Burlington Bay, mister?"

"We made no prisoners in that affair, ex-

cept the wounded, who could not escape:—I presume they are in the hospital at Montreal."

" Be you sartin i' that, mister?"

" I have told you all I know on the subject of prisoners, sir."

" Naw, mister, don't you believe as how that ere tarnation governor has let the Indians scalp 'em all?"

" I have no belief, sir, on a subject of which I am wholly ignorant."

" Naw, mister, don't ye be so plaguy close; ye must have heard of his proclamation, offering fifty dollars for each scalp, just to make the Indians kill 'em like mad wolves."

" Permit me, sir, to observe, that I am a prisoner of war, not a witness to be examined in a matter that does not concern me. Still, if it be satisfactory to the friends or relations of those who have fallen into the hands of our

troops, or of the Indians, to be assured of the truth of what you demand, I am not inclined to deny, that such a proclamation has been published.* But you can scarcely presume to lay any such act of atrocity to the charge either of me or my companions in the British army."

"Then you be a Christian man, I expect, mister?"

"You are right, sir, in supposing me so."

"Deacon Thatcher," said one of the select men, addressing himself to the president, "I

* "We have received advices," (said one of the ministers in the House of Lords,) "that General C—— assembled at Three Rivers an hundred Indian chiefs, friends to government, who brought with them *a considerable number of scalps of the rebels.* I admit that this treatment was severe; but it is probable it will produce a salutary effect on those who are in a state of revolt."—*Essais Historiques par Auberteuil.*

move that this ere prisoner be allawed a seat. We are not before yer honour in court ; an' beside we ought to think i' the condition of our fellow citizens that are in the hands i' the Britons."

Eustace was seated, and the examination continued.

" Then you do know, mister, i' that ere reward for our scalps?"

" I have already answered that question, sir."

" An' do ye think that the governor acted like a man?"

" Whatever my private opinion may be, sir, I do not hold myself obliged to give it on this occasion ; questions touching the conduct of my superior officers, or, indeed, of any officer, myself alone excepted, are idly discussed here."

" Naw, I swear, mister, if awr folks were to

do as much to your prisoners, I guess ye would have an opinion, and give it too."

" Upon the policy that may govern your conduct, sir, I have no observations to make. I ask no favour for myself. I am not brought here as a spy, to be tried for an offence against the general law of honourable war ; I was kidnapped in the vicinity of my quarters ; and you may take such advantage of the situation in which an unlucky accident has placed me, as you think compatible with your own honour and the interest of your cause."

" Ye be very bold, mister, I vaw ; and if we were to treat you as your governor treats us, I guess ye would sing to another tune."

" You would find no American soldier to imitate such barbarous and inhuman conduct," said a voice issuing from the group that stood round the table ; " so, Deacon Thatcher, there

is no necessity for harassing the prisoner with suppositions unworthy of our character."

"I am a-doing my duty, Colonel Roberdeau," said the moderator, in an angry tone; but fearing to do an unpopular act, he turned towards the audience with the smile of a solicitor on his countenance, adding, "and I appeal to all the gentlemen present if I bayn't."

Here a general discussion took place in the crowd of curious the arrival of the prisoner had drawn together, and in a few minutes Colonel Roberdeau mounted on a chair, and cried, "Order, order!" He then addressed the assembly in these words:—"My fellow citizens, I was honoured with the command of the little army that sustained the attack of the British troops at Burlington Bay. I need not repeat to you how well our people performed their

duty. The British officer now before you a prisoner of war, carried the position I occupied; and I can vouch for his humanity, as well as for his courage, on that occasion. Many of our fellow citizens were wounded, and would all have been scalped and slaughtered on the ground where they fell, had not this officer, with a young Indian who seemed superior to his race, prevented the Indians from executing their brutal mission. He saved my companions from destruction, and here no man shall deprive him of the reward due to his humanity."

Roberdeau then approached Eustace, who instantly recognized the gallant officer who showed such noble bearing at the battle of Burlington Bay, and who had made Eustace and his grenadiers prisoners in that desperate conflict, but for the opportune arrival of Bel-

legarde and the savages. Roberdeau embraced the prisoner with warm cordiality; the bystanders were deeply affected; and the stern moderator of the meeting seemed touched with the common sympathy in favour of De Courcy. His manner of showing it is characteristic:—“ Brother Amasa,” said he, addressing the master of the tavern, “ make us a good mug of apple toddy; the young man must feel plaguy cold, I expect.”

When the warm beverage arrived, the old man grasped the ample can with both hands, and raising his eyes said, “ Lord, turn thou all things to the good of thy servants,” and taking a hearty tiff, handed the vessel to Eustace, who drank to the health of the town council. After much general conversation between Roberdeau and De Courcy, respecting the recent engagement, and the probable situation of the pri-

soners who had fallen into the hands of the Canadian government, in which the assembly took a lively interest, the moderator called to order.

“ Gentlemen,” said he, “ my intention was not to be as tough as I seemed with this here young man. I only wanted to scare him a little, to find out from him what had been done with our friends, as have been taken by the Britons ; but still we have a duty to perform to our country. He seems to be a pretty clever man, and we must not let him go back to join the hosts of our enemies. His hand hath shed the blood of our citizens ; but peradventure his heart repenteth of it, and the Lord hath commanded us to do good for evil, and ‘ pray for those that despitefully use us, and persecute us.’ But, as I was a saying, he must not return to the camp of the Philistines ; and I don’t know

where we may keep him in safety. Our gaol is not finished ; we have none i' them there things called pontoons, as we read about in the papers, where poor unhappy critters are packed together like salted shad in a barrel ; and if we had, I guess we would not imitate the Britons, and leave poor souls to perish in filth, foul air, and fever.” The deacon paused to observe the impression his harangue had made on the assembly. He had much authority with his towns-men, and was called, “*a pretty considerable smart man.*” He was an elder of the presbyterian congregation, and at prayer meeting and conference was always ready with appropriate texts of scripture. Indeed, he had his Bible by heart, was fervent in his devotions, and had only one patent failing, that of being a hard creditor when he lent money at one per cent a week, or placed out on new farms “*lean stock on halves.*”

"I propose, Mister Moderator," said Roberdeau, "to take charge of the prisoner, and be accountable for him ; this will save our townsmen much trouble and care. Moreover, permit me to inform you that it is not customary in war to confine in prisons or pontoons, officers who are willing to put their honour in pledge that they will not attempt to escape."

"I second the motion of Colonel Roberdeau," said Abijah Tinkam, an old Connecticut preacher. "If we close the doors of the prison upon this our guest, we shall deprive him of spiritual comfort. Our camp meeting is fixed for next Sabbath ; and the guardians we should be obliged to leave with him would lose the opportunity of hearing that great luminary of the gospel, Ebenezer Layland, whom the Lord hath sent among us."

"I have already said, my worthy townsmen,"

said Colonel Roberdeau, “ that I will be responsible for his safe keeping until I can receive the orders of General Lincoln, to whose division we belong ; and if he will declare upon his faith and honour not to escape, he shall remain in my house for the present. In due time he will be either exchanged for one of our citizens, or otherwise disposed of as the government may direct.”

Eustace readily assented to these conditions, gave his parole in writing, and withdrew with Colonel Roberdeau, whose house was not far distant from the place where the municipal council was held. This worthy citizen and gallant officer, kind, generous, and obliging to all, felt an additional interest in De Courcy, on account of his name, which, like his own, was of French origin. “ Perhaps,” he would say to his family, “ he is a descendant of one of those

persecuted families called Hugenots, who were driven from their country and hunted down like wild beasts by the fanatical spirit that governed the last acts of the reign of Louis XIV." The ancestor of Roberdeau was one of the victims of that inhuman decree called the revocation of the edict of Nantes. "Had it not been for that impolitic and atrocious measure," he would say to his children, "we should now be in the mild climate and smiling vallies of the Cevennes, in the country of song and chivalry, amidst our vines and mulberry trees. Children of misfortune should be kind to one another, and especially such as suffer for 'conscience sake.'" Where such sentiments animated the heart of the master of the house, it may easily be conceived that Eustace was treated with attention and kindness; nor was he surprised to find the mistress of the mansion in all respects corres-

ponding to the high opinion the husband inspired. The most delicate and unaffected cordiality, and all the honours of refined hospitality were shown by that accomplished and elegant woman, who, in a situation far removed from the luxury and research of cities, taught her children music, drawing, and languages, with as much ability as could be found in a boarding school of Paris or London.

It often happens that the traveller finds in the remote settlements of the United States, individuals, whose information and urbanity form a striking contrast with the rude customs and uncultivated society that surround them. This is owing to a variety of causes, which it may not be irrelevant to our general plan to explain.

In that country, large fortunes are acquired by commerce and successful speculation, and

when acquired, are kept in a constant state of mutation owing to the total absence of tenants, rent-rolls, and such real estate, as produces in old countries a regular and unvariable income. Where no man will consent to labour on the land of another, there can be no landlord, with his steward, and subalterns, and farmers, who take long leases of the soil they cultivate. The American only exchanges his labour for money when he is yet unable to purchase land, which he can do as, we have already shown, at the expiration of a very limited term. His sole ambition is to become proprietor and allodial lord of his field and his log-house. Some few exceptions in the vicinity of large commercial towns where land is dear, only prove the general rule throughout that extensive agricultural country. The merchant, whose commerce produces large sums of money, cannot, as in

Europe, purchase a regular invariable revenue, obtain a title of nobility, and enter into the ranks of an aristocracy, that withdraws itself from the business and bustle of life, and forms a separate class in society, deriving its importance solely from its permanent wealth and influence over dependent vassals. The owner of a million of acres in the United States is very often without any regular income ; like the merchant, his whole fortune is in capital, totally unproductive until it be sold to small proprietors ; or, as in the Southern States, cultivated by slaves. In such a state of society, the merchant is in a great measure compelled to invest his fortune in banks, insurance companies, and manufactories ; he is obliged to increase the number of his ships, to invent new investments, and keep his property in circulation. This is necessarily accompanied with risk ; and the

failure of correspondents in distant parts of the world very often troubles the golden dreams, and places in jeopardy the fancied security of the American merchant. Every great political event that changes the regular course of his foreign relations, exposes him to ruin ; so that nothing is more common, than to see a man who but a short year ago lived like a nabob, surrounded with all the splendour and luxury that money could procure, changing his equipage, from a chariot lined with satin, to a common family waggon ; and retiring from the ostentation of a town life, to the simplicity in which our friend Roberdeau lived with his refined and virtuous family.

To this modest retreat, he carried some few remains of former splendour : his wife clings to her piano, her daughters preserve their drawing materials, and he carefully packs up from the general

wreck his books, those dead friends who give charms to our solitude, and teach us to look with resignation on the changes of fortune. He remains the same man without the vanity that wealth is apt to give to its possessor ; he has more sober views of human felicity ; and his education, his manners and influence over his rustic neighbours, tend to preserve in the wilderness that refinement and urbanity, of which the passing traveller can scarce render to himself an account. In Europe, when a *mere gentleman* loses his fortune, he loses his independence, and becomes the humble *protégé* of some more happy acquaintance, or he seeks some employment under government, whose duties he performs, as might be expected from a man unacquainted with order, industry, and business. He loses his dignity without losing his pride ; and carries his head high while his

heart becomes mean and corrupt. He is the creature, the partisan of some powerful person, and

“ Like a true bred spaniel, licks
The hand that cuffs him and the foot that kicks.”

In this unhappy class are recruited the troublesome elements that disturb and carry disease into the mass of society ; they recommend themselves to the parties in and out of power by an intemperate zeal, and become what the French significantly call *les âmes damnées*, of those who employ them under the gentle appellation of partisan or friend. They compose the swarms of panders, parasites, schemers, and adventurers, who live by their wits when they cannot find any of those employments that require neither knowledge or assiduity ; they fill the anti-chambers of the great and all those insignificant offices that luxury, corruption, and inequality

of condition have created. In the United States of America there is no grass cattle of this description. There, every man must be *something*; must work if he would not starve or become a pauper; must have some calling or profession useful to society; and one of the chief causes of the rapidly accumulating prosperity of that country, is the total absence of unproductive hands.

The gentleman in whose house Eustace was held in honourable captivity, was the son of a great merchant, whose commercial relations extended to the remotest nations of the globe. But fortune, whose giddy wheel turns up a hundred blanks to one prize, reduced him to very narrow means of support for a large family; and his son, fatigued with the uncertainty of a profession whose success assures only a temporary tranquillity, retired upon the property where we now find him, in the environs of Lake

Champlain. Here he built a large and comfortable house, and with the aid of several poor Irish labourers, who hired themselves for a given time, in order to pay the expenses of their passage across the Atlantic, he cleared and stocked a large farm, and secured his wife and children from want and humiliation. He acquired over his neighbours that ascendancy which no institutions, however democratical, can destroy, that of learning, knowledge, and personal superiority. He was going on prosperously, when his useful and peaceful labours were suspended by the invasion of which we have already spoken. History has recorded the rise, progress, and fate of that unhallowed struggle, hatched in an evil hour, the only object of which was to give new force to a party in Great Britain, that is gradually dying of plethora; whose body is overcharged with fat,

while its extremities are withered or paralyzed. The abettors of the divine right of the mother country, to impose laws on that great colony, without consulting the inhabitants, have accused the Americans of ingratitude; but time who, as the Italians say, *è un gallantuomo*, has placed those speculative questions in a true light; and the paternal affection of the British government, has been proclaimed by the ruin of towns, the violation of treaties, and the scalping of its children by the savage tribes in its dependence.

“ It is painful,” said Roberdeau to Eustace, “ to a British officer of generous feelings and high spirit, to listen to a recapitulation of our griefs, and find himself bound to support our oppressors, and participate in the wrongs they inflict.”

“ It is impossible,” said Eustace, “ to justify that which is unjust; but as I cannot be at the

same time legislator and soldier, I have no opinion to express on these unhappy divisions. If men were moderate, equitable, and content, with such acquisitions as morality would sanction, I should not now be a prisoner of war; for war would cease altogether between people who call themselves civilized;—but if I may judge from the number of years that have been consumed by nations in ‘doing one another as much harm as possible,’ I must conclude, that war is a necessary evil, permitted to purge dense populations, as storms and tempests are sent to renew the healthful state of the atmosphere. The affairs of this world are governed by general laws, which no individual can modify, much less comprehend; and as the circle of obligation and duty is traced for each one in the condition in which Providence has placed him, you and I are free from blame, although

we fight in opposite ranks. The universality of war has made courage a virtue, since we are agreed to respect it even when it is employed to any great extent in opposition to the laws;—besides, is it not the great source of honour and dignity, since the highest ranks of society are filled with men who have no other title to the distinction and power to which a contempt of danger has raised them? It is not the man who builds a ship, invents a steam-engine, discovers the vaccine, the printing-press, or the mariner's compass, that obtains a seat in the senate of his country, or ‘sits in high places.’”

“ We view these matters differently in America,” replied Roberdeau; “ we think with Dean Swift, that he who can make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, is worth all these conquerors whose exploits Fame has published with her thousand trumpets. We

consult the prosperity of the great mass of society in the formation of our laws, instead of immolating it to the separate interests of a few, who, more happy than others, think themselves more wise, and with their increasing prosperity and power, often forget the sources from which both are derived."

CHAPTER II.

Loin du faste de Rome et des pompes mondaines,
Des temples consacrés aux vanités humaines,
Dont l'appareil superbe impose à l'univers,
L'humble religion se cache en des deserts.

HENRIADE.

WHILE Eustace remained with this worthy family, the revolutionary war was carried on with vigour in the north and south ; he was not without hopes of being released by the division commanded by General Burgoyne, that passed within a few miles of the place of his captivity, towards that memorable spot, where the Martinet of the British army, the parade in-

spector of St. James's Park, delivered his sword to Gates and Lincoln, at the head of a body of untaught militia. The genii of this lake seem favourable to the cause of liberty and justice, since in all the combats that have had important results in the vicinity of its waters, victory has been on the side of the American arms. The fate of the gallant and accomplished Burgoyne was not long a mystery in the town where Eustace remained a prisoner; and a general rejoicing, in which the old and the young cordially participated, convinced him that no partisans of the ancient government could be found among them. This national feeling did not show itself in hyperbolical joy, drinking, shouting, and revelry. The occasion was too solemn, too important, to call forth signs of extravagant hilarity, especially among a serious and pious people. A great “camp meeting” was an-

nounced by all the village preachers, to be held on an extensive plain, that had been lately cleared of trees. To this assembly the inhabitants of all the new settlements within fifty miles flocked with their wives and children, bringing with them tents, cooking utensils, and provisions for several days. It was a regular *bivouac*, with this difference, that the exercises were those of prayer, singing psalms, and pious exhortation. These, during three days, were only interrupted by sleep and frugal repasts. Trees that had been cut within a few feet of the ground served for altars, where the ardent minister excited the enthusiasm of his hearers by words and gestures, that would seem extravagant and absurd in the eyes of our high churchmen, who appeal to the sober reason rather than to the sensibilities of the congregation. When one preacher finished, another

commenced ; and many a lukewarm listener caught “*the light of free grace, and felt an inward assurance of being numbered among the elect;*” many who came out of curiosity were “*awakened to a sense of their lost condition, felt the Spirit entering into their hearts, and buckled on the armour of faith and righteousness.*” Eustace remained an unmoved spectator of this novel scene, although he was not unnoticed by the multitude, many of whom prayed aloud for his conversion, and besought the Most High “*to take the film from his eyes, and bring him to a knowledge of the Word.*”

Eustace had no very distinct notion of the fundamental doctrine of these pious people ; free grace, election, and predestination, formed no part of the dogmas of the church of which he was a member ; yet he did not reject, as

absurd and erroneous, articles of faith he did not adopt. We find in the itinerary which he kept at the time to which we refer, a passage on the subject of incredulity, which will not be misplaced here.

“ The leading feature of that frigid philosophy that has laid its deadening gripe on all the sublime emotions of credulity, is, that we ought to reject what we cannot comprehend—in other words, to disbelieve whatever is not susceptible of demonstration. Now there is one fundamental error in this: to refuse our assent to that which is possible merely because we do not understand it, is an assumption that we are sufficiently enlightened to condemn it as false, and believe the contrary; thus our very ignorance is converted into an argument to prove that we are sufficiently informed to decide and condemn. Our organs are made to com-

pass limited objects necessary to our happiness and preservation ; but do we not possess any faculty that enables us to analyze things we can neither see, smell, or touch ; and yet this is the case with that very rational faculty we employ in refuting the existence of the faculty itself. Many men deny the existence of the soul only because they cannot describe its nature, form, or action ; and some go so far as to deny the existence of Deity, by way of avenging themselves of the Creator, who has refused them infinite knowledge, and wisdom, and power equal to his own ! Our intelligence is an instrument of daily use, but its laws are unknown to us ; we only know mind by its effects : does it for this reason inevitably follow, that mind does not exist ? Materialists deny that our sensations are constituent elements of facts ; and yet they are as self-evident as any axiom of

comprehensible science. To analyze intelligence, we ought to possess a faculty superior to the thing we examine. Were there nothing in the essence of incredulity worse than the annihilation of hope, and the grandeur of our destiny, the necessity of seeking happiness ought to lead us to adopt a more comforting, a more solacing doctrine; which, to say the least of it, is as easy of belief as that which the school of “the patriarch of Ferney” has disseminated for the misery and despair of its disciples. It is of this discarded and calumniated credulity that science and civilization are the fair fruit; that has produced whatever is nearest to perfection in literature and the fine arts; that has left us monuments that attest its divine inspirations in the poems of Homer, Virgil, Dante, Tasso, and Milton; in the Parthenon, the Temple of Ephesus, the Church of

St. Peter. Had Rafael been a cold materialist, could he have given to the portrait of the Virgin that expression that artists call *divine*? Had Cleomenes only felt that he was employing his chisel in making the statue of an Athenian woman, would the block of marble have taken the form, the inimitable form of the Venus de Medicis? Could incredulity produce the Jupiter of Phidias, the Apollo of Belvidere? No; incredulity has no higher conceptions than a canal, a bridge, a highway, and a tomb!—It sees only the *palpable half of man*, and perishes with the creature of its own creation."

Eustace, whose interests and affections were far distant from the spot where the fortune of war had placed him, passed many a weary day and many a sleepless night in hopeless wishes and fruitless conjectures. He possessed not only the courage, but the resignation of a man of

strong nerves ; but these were feeble arms in a contest with the uncertainty in which the total absence of news of Matilda held his affections suspended. He had no means of making his situation known to his friends ; he had disappeared no one knew by what accident from his post ; he might be accused of desertion, might be under humiliating imputations, painful to his family, his friends, and above all, to that being in whose affections he placed his best hopes of happiness. These apprehensions cast around him a dark and oppressive cloud, out of which he could not extricate himself. Application had been made to General Lincoln to exchange him ; but that officer had been called to the south, and was occupied with matters of more importance to his country than the personal concerns of an officer of the enemy's ranks. He now regretted that he had been

made an object of the kindness and hospitality of Roberdeau. Had he been shut up in a prison he might have escaped ; he might have eluded the vigilance of his guardians, or broken through the barriers between him and liberty ; but he was bound by his word of honour, and his generous enemy was pledged for his safe keeping. “ It is not wonderful,” he would often say, “ that men prefer death to captivity. Here I vegetate in a soil where my happiness withers. I am deprived of that which alone can render life desirable; ignorant of what may have happened to her I love ; the most interesting moments of my existence wasted in obscurity and inaction ; the great end and aim of my ambition, my education, the hopes of my family snatched from me by an unlucky accident ; and still, were I again free, I must owe my future fame to the prosperity of a cause

which my reason and good feelings condemn. Is this then that tree of promise I planted when I entered upon the stage of life to play my part full of hope and joy; when the horizon was all sunshine and prospects of happiness, glory, and public consideration invited me onward. Instead of culling the flowers of spring, and inhaling their perfume, all is frozen and blighted in my destiny ! To what purpose has Nature given me strong passions, integrity of intention, strength of mind and body, if such gifts must moulder in sloth and obscurity, whilst many march patiently and heedlessly on towards an eminence unsuited to their faculties and disposition ? How much more enviable is the fate of these Americans, with whose daily efforts success keeps pace ! Artificial states of society, where ‘ the race is not to the swift, the battle to the strong, nor riches to men of under-

standing,' are not made for me, or for men like like me. Had it pleased Providence to fix my abode, and that of Matilda in one of these obscure towns, and left us free to seek felicity by the shortest path, neither of us would now be in a condition which the meanest hind that tills yonder field need envy." Such were the daily reflections of De Courcy. His health fled, he grew melancholy, taciturn, lost his sleep and appetite, and although the good family of Roberdeau showed him every attention that sympathy inspired, and all those little demonstrations of attachment so well calculated to soothe an unhappy spirit, his taste for every species of enjoyment forsook him, and the ravages which grief made were soon visible on his countenance. Roberdeau pitied him; he saw that noble and manly figure, once full of health and animation, wasting away under the influence

of an afflicted mind ; and when Eustace grew so weak as to keep his room, and be no longer able to appear in the family circle, this brave and generous American determined to take effectual measures to obtain his release, and send him back to the Lake of the Mountains. In consequence he wrote the following letter to the commander-in-chief of the American army :—

“ GENERAL,

“ An officer of the 10th British regiment has been for a long period of time a prisoner in the town I inhabit. He was my adversary at the battle of Burlington Bay, and by extraordinary courage and energy carried the post I defended. I have in common with my country to lament the loss of many of my fellow-citizens, who found an honourable grave on the spot where Captain De Courcy fought in the ranks

of our enemies ; but his humanity and generosity on that occasion gave him a title to my esteem and best services. He dared to disobey the sanguinary order that had been given to the savage auxiliaries to butcher and scalp the prisoners ! These he defended by exposing his person at a moment when the safety of the party he commanded might have served as a pretext to a more timorous conscience, to permit the Indians to scalp such prisoners as lay wounded on the field. Since he has fallen into our hands. I have done every thing in my power to prove to him, that Americans appreciate in their enemies those sentiments of humanity that regulate their own actions. His health has greatly suffered ; what the sword has spared is sinking under the pain and affliction that result from captivity, far from the objects of his affection. I solicit his liberty on

condition of not serving against us ; and I am authorized to become his pledge for the future, as I have been for the past, from the proofs he has given of respect for his parole since he has been our prisoner.

“ I ask you, general, to save a life that was exposed to save our fallen citizens, and at the same time give a lesson of generosity to those who affect to be our superiors.”

CHAPTER III.

Thus goldfinches, in fields well plac'd,
The distant birds engage ;
And, by their dainty forms and voice,
Invite them to their cage.

PETER PINDAR.

How sometimes nature will betray its folly,
Its tenderness, and make itself a pastime
To harder bosoms !

SHAKSPEARE.

IT is now time to leave Eustace, in the hope of a favourable answer to the application made by Roberdeau in his behalf, and return to our friends at the Lake of the Two Mountains.

When Matilda had laid her last injunctions

on Bellegarde to watch over De Courcy, and that favourite partisan of the house of Argenteuil had set out to join the army, the family, with the exception of Bertinval, was gloomy and sorrowful. Even the old baron, who had his reasons for being reconciled to the absence of a visitor, for whose society his daughter had a predilection that was sufficiently apparent to excite suspicion, could not escape from the melancholy that had propagated itself in the space of a few short hours. The calamities and disasters of war, were the natural subjects of conversation ; and Madame De Belrose shed tears when she reflected, that hunger, sickness, and battle, might deprive society of so fine a young man as De Courcy, who possessed, she said, all the grace and politeness of a French chevalier. But this superiority, she declared, was owing to the education he had received at

the college of St. Omer. She maintained that the English, who have never left their own country, are proud, awkward, and rude; so apprehensive of passing for persons of less importance than they suppose themselves to be, that they are total strangers to that elegant simplicity of manners, which characterizes the well-bred Frenchman. “*Fier comme un Ecos-sais,*” she said, was not applied without reason to a people, who have so little benevolence in their demeanour towards strangers, who have not been presented to them with the formality employed in the reception of an ambassador;—a people, who scarcely deign to tell “what’s o’clock, which way’s the wind,” in a stage-coach or steam-boat, without the apprehension of lessening their dignity in the opinion of the interrogator;—a people, in short, who are loved by none, though they be respected by all

These observations greatly annoyed Berthinval, who pretended to be a great judge in such matters, and intimated that the mildness of De Courcy was all affectation.

“ He feels his own force,” sir, said Father Leclerc, “ and, probably, relies upon it for the respect that is due to superiority, accompanied by candour and good breeding. He despairs, I have no doubt, that empiricism which most people employ, to impose upon and deceive others into an opinion of their title to consideration and esteem, flattering to vanity and self-love. And yet the quack, who vends his nostrums in the market-place to obtain a living, is less despicable than many of those gilded shells without kernels, that seek to pass for more than they are worth.”

“ You are severe on the English,” said Berthinval, “ if you mean to apply your observations to them.”

"Such was not my intention," replied the priest; "impostors of the kind I describe are to be found without going so far to seek them."

Bertinval reddened. "The candour, sir, to which you seem to attach so much value, is very well for a young lady in leading-strings, but is bad merchandize to carry into the commerce of life. It seems to me, your argument proves too much, since those who would be guided by it could scarce escape from being dupes, in the present state of society."

"Those who want candour," rejoined the priest, "deceive every one, and finish by deceiving themselves. A man cannot long counterfeit the virtues he does not possess; and when the cheat is discovered, he falls, in public estimation, beneath his intrinsic value."

"You have been very unfortunate, Father Leclerc, if, in your progress through life, you

have found the original of the portrait you have drawn. Although I have lived much in society, I have not had occasion to remark such duplicity."

"In mixed society, sir, one has not many opportunities of carefully analyzing the motives of human conduct; there we only see the surface of things: it is in the intimacy of unguarded confidence, that want of candour is fatal to human happiness. In the eyes of the world, Tartuffe was neither a rogue nor a hypocrite."

"I ask pardon for reminding you, Father Leclerc, that Tartuffe was written to expose men of your cloth, at a time when it was dangerous, if not impossible, to attack them openly and directly."

"The great painter of human vice and folly, to whom you allude, sir, made a portrait in

which bad men of every description found some of their own features, whether disguised under the cloak of religion, the blandishments of artful gravity, or the affected levity of what you call a good fellow ; and the last is the most dangerous of all, because the least suspected of duplicity."

The tone of this dialogue had too much asperity in it to escape the notice of the baron, who could not well comprehend the warmth of the good chaplain. There was something personal towards Bertinval in his manner ; and although the baron was not ignorant of some of the faults of his nephew, he did not suspect that any of the priest's observations could fairly be applied to him. The young man seemed to conform himself, without an effort, to the quiet, patriarchal life of the baron ; and, in his opinion, was as perfect as men are at his age. He hu-

moured the old gentleman in all his notions, pretended to love retirement, and talked, with apparent disgust, of the vices of society, and the immorality of great cities. Wherever his uncle went, he was his good companion ; and took an interest in every thing that seemed to interest him. In short, he gained so complete an ascendancy over him, that the baron considered him as the staff of his declining age—“bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.” The attachment of Bertinval seemed the more necessary to him, as his daughter showed him no other attentions than those that seemed mechanical and involuntary, as much the result of habit as of sentiment. “She is a good girl,” he would say, “but cold and reserved. She has never felt the want of tenderness ; and strong sympathies can only be awakened in her breast by something foreign to those objects

of every-day affection to which she is accustomed.

Matilda had lately avoided the society of her father, in order to escape from that of his friend and companion ; and although the clear-sighted and sagacious chaplain warned her of the influence she was losing in favour of that of her adversary, she had too much reliance on her father's good sense and tenderness, to believe that her cousin could injure her if he were so inclined. In this extreme confidence there was much error. There is an age when the various sources of habitual enjoyment cease to flow into the heart of man ; when the homage of the world ceases with the interest that once inspired it. At this period of dependence and weakness, men often become susceptible, if not exigent, in their family circle, of an increase of tenderness and attention. They seek kindness at

home to indemnify them for what they have lost or abandoned abroad. Children, for the most part, are insensible to this change in their parents: accustomed, from their infancy, to receive much and render little, they are not aware that a time has arrived, when their role changes, and their part becomes more difficult to act. Even those who are not wanting in high sentiments of duty, very often discharge it without emotion; without reflecting that duty is a cold, inflexible monitor, whose laws a moral agent is not permitted to elude, and, consequently, can be entitled to no merit for observing. Those who confine themselves strictly to the observance of its ordinances, may hold themselves blameless; but they do not, on that account, excite either sympathy or affection. This may account for the want of love and cordiality in families, and an apparent indifference, often bordering on

neglect, in children towards their parents. There are spirits that such conduct revolts. There are fathers who bear impatiently such a mode of repaying years of tenderness and solicitude. Love, of whatever nature it may be, is, in the words of an old proverb, “a game that one cannot play alone,” for any length of time ; and if its legitimate current be stopped, will often trace for itself new channels. Children ought to keep this in mind : no age is exempt from jealousy ; and, least of any, that when we stand in need of a consolation we have earned, very often, by the sacrifice of repose, health, and pleasure.

Matilda sincerely loved and respected her father, and until her mind was occupied by De Courcy, was his constant companion. Her playfulness and vivacity gave a charm to her society, which rendered the baron independent

of every other. He knew all her thoughts and wishes, was her best friend, and might have become her best confidant, had she chosen to make known to him her secret inclinations, and engagement with Eustace. But as love such as hers really was, disposes to solitude, and neglect of all things else, the baron, without knowing the cause, perceived that his daughter was no longer the same she had always been towards him. The idea of her lover was constantly present to her mind ; his absence stripped every thing around her of their accustomed charms ; her pony, her dogs, her books, her music, all were forgotten. She began a thousand things, and could finish nothing. Her walks were long, lonely, and melancholy. When her father was occupied, and not likely to notice her absence, she would extend her march towards the iron cross, silent witness of her lover's promises ;

and with streaming eyes interrogate it, and offer prayers to heaven for his safety and fidelity. This disposition of mind changed all her tranquil habits, and left her father to the influence of her artful and unprincipled cousin.

Before Eustace was made a prisoner by the Americans, he addressed his letters for Matilda under cover to father Leclerc ; but these never reached either of them ; the cause of which we shall presently learn.

We have already spoken of the political opinions of the baron. He was first upon the governor's list of persons disaffected towards the British government ; and as his rank and fortune gave him much influence over the Canadians, he was strictly observed. He had shown no disposition to conciliate Sir Crowdie Macgrosgutt, whose contumeliousness offended, while his marked partiality and exclusive atten-

tions to his own countrymen alienated, the good-will of the ancient nobility. Incapable of conciliating those he governed, he knew of no other means than force and fraud to insure their obedience. When Eustace received instructions to organize the militia, he was given to understand that he was expected to note in his reports to head-quarters, his opinion of the conduct and fidelity of D'Argenteuil. To this injunction he paid no attention, and consequently recourse was had to a more complaisant and less scrupulous agent. The morals of Bertinval were suited to the business of a spy, and his calculations included the ultimate power he might obtain over the fortune and person of his uncle, in case any unforeseen event might deprive him of the hand of his cousin. His character of near relation secured him against suspicion; and he readily yielded to the suggestions of ambition, which the governor excited

by golden promises in the event of real services being rendered to the state. The known partiality of Bertinval to every thing English, inspired confidence in his zeal and devotedness ; and the impunity which power can afford to baseness, made him accept without hesitation the odious task which he could so easily mask under the pretext of making his court to Matilda. This mission had been proposed to him through that “ man of all work,” the town major, who, on former occasions, had witnessed the elasticity of his conscience. To render his task more easy of execution, he secretly obtained the nomination of an ancient pensioner to the place of post-master at the town of St. Ann, who had orders to deliver to him all letters he might desire to open and dispose of, no matter to whom they might be addressed. By these means he became acquainted with the sentiments

of De Courcy, and purloined the letters addressed to his cousin and her confessor, to be made use of as circumstances might need.

From these letters he obtained the secret of his cousin's engagements with De Courcy, and formed his plan of vengeance, upon a thorough conviction, that she could never yield to the authority of her father in his favour. He determined to watch her motions, excite the animosity of her father against her, and if possible replace her in the baron's affection.

Hopeless and desperate, he determined to wait with patience, and struggle till death against every obstacle to the possession of that fortune, upon which his hopes of future independence were built. His influence over the destiny of the baron was augmented by new motives of suspicion arising out of political causes. The king of France had declared in favour of the revolted

colonies, sent La Fayette and Rochambeau to their aid, with a fleet and army, and well-founded apprehensions were entertained by the Canadian government, that these two generals might invade the colony, awaken the ancient affections of the population, and offer the people either a republican form of government, or that of which the treaty of 1760 had deprived them. Many of the ancient families that had lost their influence and political authority by the introduction of strangers into all the places of trust and emolument, ardently desired the expulsion of the British from their country ; and a general rising might have produced that event, had not the apprehension of the still greater evil of democratical institutions ingrafted upon ignorance and superstition, restrained the more wise and moderate of the leading men. In this view of the subject, too, the clergy concurred. They

were all Roman Catholics, of which religion the essence is quietism, and consequently in opposition to free inquiry, free discussion, or innovation of any description whatsoever.

The people of that new country, inhabiting the fertile banks of the St. Lawrence, are happy, ignorant, and pious. They read not, neither do they write; and polemics and politics are as unknown to them as to the cattle they drive to the field. They never heard of disputed dogmas. Whatever relates to duty in this life, and immortality in the next, they leave to be settled by their priests; and the respect shown to their clergy and their faith, is the only hold on their fidelity, of which their new government can boast. Had Great Britain treated them as she has treated the Irish people, professing the same doctrines, Canada would long since have ceased to be numbered among her trans-atlantic

possessions. But happily for these innocent and peaceful subjects of the British crown, their distance from the metropolis increases the danger of loading them with tithes, church-rates, and church dignitaries, of a religion they do not profess.

The crisis, at the moment of which we speak, was such as to call forth the utmost vigilance on the part of government; and the conduct of D'Argenteuil seemed of a doubtful character:—he showed little zeal; and when he assembled the militia of which he had the command, he only spoke to them of their country, and the importance of defending their rights, but said nothing in praise of the new government. In private he sometimes amused his family with speculative projects; and perceiving among the French officers who came to abet the efforts of the Americans, several names of persons connected with his family in France,

ventured to write to them by a private conveyance, in order, if possible, to learn their projects relating to Canada. To all this Bertinval was a party ; he encouraged his uncle in his dislike of the colonial government, and at the same time transmitted, with much exaggeration, regular reports of his words and actions to the governor. Thus the depraved and ungrateful nephew employed his time in weaving a snare to entrap the unsuspecting baron, and, when an occasion might favour him, obtain by force and terror, what he despaired of gaining by personal merit. About this time the baron was taken suddenly ill ; and his uneasiness about the establishment of his daughter increased in proportion with his apprehension of leaving her without a protector. He resolved to put his affairs in order, and commanded the attendance of his nephew in his chamber.

" You know, my dear nephew," said the good man, " that since the death of your mother, I have cherished the hope of uniting you with my daughter. Unfortunately, she has shown so little inclination to second my wishes, that I have waited until this moment in the hope of finding her more docile. But the present moment, when my life seems rapidly drawing to a close, is not favourable to renew my importunities. My daughter would now reasonably defer her marriage on account of the state of my health. But I have so disposed of my fortune, that in case I should not recover, you will be placed in the best possible condition to conduct the affair I have had so much at heart to a happy issue. I leave you joint heirs and executors. It will be your own fault if you do not succeed."

Although this was not all that Bertinval

could have wished, he found in the arrangement sufficient means of extricating himself from his embarrassments, as soon as it might please Heaven to remove his uncle, and for the present consoled himself with the belief, that he had not long to wait.

It often happens, that when a man has, in the expectation of soon quitting the world, "put his house in order," and made suitable preparations for his departure, his mind becomes more calm and refreshed, and resignation and peace replace anxiety and agitation. Such was the case of the baron. He found himself better; and his health in a few days so much advanced, that his family rejoiced in the prospect of his entire recovery. Bertinval alone sickened at the thought of remaining any longer in a state of dependence. His affairs required dispatch; he had incurred large debts

in England ; he could not long conceal from his creditors the place of his retreat ; and a seasonable discovery of his true situation might entirely change his uncle's intentions, and expose him to shame and poverty. There were moments when his conscience and reason urged him to make a full disclosure, and throw himself on the generosity of a parent, who had given him so many proofs of indulgence and attachment. Had he obeyed so unerring a monitor, he would have avoided the evils that lay in his path ; but he was vain and weak, and found it much easier to disguise his follies than bear the shame and reproaches that a confession of his first steps in vice might bring upon him. He had, he thought, gone too far to make a safe retreat possible ; and he became a villain from calculation as well as from principle. Such are the ordinary consequences of a

departure from the rules of honour and integrity, whether it result from passion or weakness. The mind becomes disordered, and loses its power to guide and conduct us; and as one crime begets another, the culpable descends by degrees the scale of moral dignity, until he becomes almost incapable of appreciating virtue in himself or others. To this condition had a series of bad actions brought the heart of Bertinval; so that instead of rejoicing at the recovery of his benefactor, he only saw in it an obstacle to the immediate gratification of his wishes. He consequently renewed his correspondence with the governor, with the intention of drawing down upon the head of his uncle the vengeance of a jealous power, which the old man had neither strength of nerves nor health to resist.

CHAPTER IV.

La vie humaine est semblable à un chemin, dont l'issue est un précipice affreux : on nous en avertit dès le premier pas, mais la loi est prononcée ; il faut avancer toujours. Je voudrais rétourner sur mes pas ;—marche !—marche !

BOSSUET.

THAT epoch when father Leclerc was called to his annual retreat at the seminary of Montreal had now arrived, and as the baron's convalescence was such as to give little uneasiness to his friends, the good priest took leave of the family. He left his pupil less reconciled than he could have desired to the absence and silence of

De Courcy; but he had taught her to put her trust in Providence, and persuaded as he was himself, that reliance ought to be placed on the faith and truth of Eustace, he kept alive her hopes, although he could not entirely calm her apprehensions.

On his arrival at the seminary, the superior received him with his accustomed cordiality; but before entering into the chamber of seclusion, requested him to visit a person in the last stage of a consumption, who required spiritual aid, and was incapable of making her confession in the French language. "As you understand English, good brother," said he, "I charge you with the care of preparing her for a quiet exit from this troubled life to a better."

Father Leclerc, whose philanthropic disposition made him ever ready to obey the call of

duty, hastened to the place where the sick penitent waited his coming. It was a small inn situated in the suburbs of the city. Here he found a set of noisy boatmen singing and carousing in the outward room. His clerical habit was sufficient to produce a respectful silence; for among the common people in Canada, the philosophy of the French revolution had not rendered that habit an object of derision. “Death” was not there at least deemed “an eternal sleep,” nor that part of “the Divinity that stirs within us,” called an “organic action.” The company stood up and doffed their bonnets while the clergyman passed with the landlord into a private apartment.

“ You have a sick woman in your house, Jean Baptiste?” said the clergyman.

“ A poor stranger, father,” said the inn-keeper, “ who is not long in town.”

“ Call your wife, and tell her to prepare the sick person for my visit.”

“ And well pleased the poor soul will be to see your reverence and speak English to you, for she can scarcely make us comprehend what she wants.”

“ Enough, my friend; let me see her immediately.”

This put an end to a long history into which Jean Baptiste Tellier would have entered, detailing, as is customary, with scrupulous minuteness, every word and sign the sick woman had used since she entered his house. In a few minutes the wife appeared, and conducted the priest into a small chamber, where he found a pale emaciated face, that cast a look of gratitude upon him, from eyes that were beaming with expression, though deeply sunk in their sockets. Bright they were in

proportion to the advanced stage of a consumption, that was drawing its victim towards the tomb. The flower of life still glowed while its root was scarce held by its remaining tendril.

“The blessing of God rest upon my daughter!” said the priest.

“I stand much in need of it, holy father,” answered a faint and suppliant voice.

“The more you are convinced of that, the greater chance you have of obtaining divine consolation. The special favour of Heaven is only administered to those who seek it in humbleness of spirit, humility, and contrition.”

Deep and repeated sighs issued from the exhausted bosom of the poor penitent, and tears choked her utterance. Her efforts to speak were unavailing. The priest kneeled and prayed aloud; and in a few minutes she became more composed. A hectic glow rose into her cheeks

with the effort she made to collect her spirits ; and with a tremulous voice she begged to confess, and receive the sacrament according to the rite of the Catholic church. Our readers will not expect us to narrate what Father Leclerc himself could not reveal without violating his duty ; but there was in the confession of the penitent, enough to excite in the breast of the minister the deepest sympathy and most painful emotion. To the poor woman herself, the effort seemed unequal to her strength : she made long pauses ; her cheeks were alternately glowing and pale, and her eye-lids fell upon their orbits, as if the last word were to close the scene of her existence. The priest ordered restoring cordials to be given to her, sent for the best physician to attend her, and before he left her, had the satisfaction to see her sink into a peaceful slumber.

"Let her want for nothing, Jean Baptiste; I will pay you whatever expense she may incur," said the good man as he left the inn.
"I shall return in the morning; in the mean time, I hope that the respect due to her situation may be sufficient to silence the noisy clamour of those who are not, like her, afflicted with ill health. Let them remember that those who repulse the claims of suffering humanity, provoke the justice of Providence, and may some time stand in need of the favours they refuse to others."

The recommendation of the priest was not unheeded, and the sick person was left to pass the night quietly. The following morning Father Leclerc returned with a small purse of gold taken from the little treasury of the seminary, to pay the expenses of the sick woman, and en-

sure the attention and kindness of the persons who served her. He found her in a tranquil state of mind, and her voice changed from that faint and feeble note that indicates debility, to a firmer and more elevated tone. She spoke with an air of confidence of the hopes she entertained of recovering, under the charitable care of that second providence she had found in the good priest.

“ If it be the will of Providence to restore you to health, and proleng your days, what, may I ask without indiscretion, is to become of you in a strange country, where you are, without fortune or connexions? I do not ask you why you came here alone, poor and unprotected from your native country; that is your secret, which I have no curiosity to become acquainted with; but, as it has pleased the Almighty to

make me instrumental in your recovery, a sentiment of compassion leads me to inquire into the projects you may have formed."

" My prospects, reverend father, are very limited. I have had a good education ; I can teach music, drawing, and embroidery, and have no doubt to be able to find employment in a society where there are children to be taught, and there is more wealth than instruction. Independently of this resource, I have some hopes of finding"—here her voice began to falter, her frame became agitated, a spasm that suspended her breathing would have made her story very brief, had not a flood of tears come to her relief.

" Be calm, child of sorrow," said the priest, " and postpone to another occasion the recital of any thing that would give you pain. I have no idle curiosity to satisfy ; my mission is to alle-

viate your sufferings, without examining the nature of their source."

"To accomplish that benevolent task, holy father, it is necessary to disclose the principal motive that has led me so far from home, and made me a poor pensioner on your bounty. My misfortunes excite your charity; but an unreserved sincerity can alone give me a title to your protection. I came to Canada to seek my husband, not for any personal advantage to myself, but from a sentiment of tenderness towards my child, which never slumbers in the breast of a mother, however cruelty or perfidy may extinguish it in that of a wife for the author of her calamity. Dare I, reverend sir, trespass on your patience? I would fain make you acquainted with my sad history."

"The Master I serve, daughter, has left me the example of the good Samaritan. My

duty calls me to comfort the afflicted and broken-hearted, to gather the tears of contrition, and make an offering of them at the throne of mercy, to atone for the frailties and errors of imperfect humanity. If you deem it necessary to your tranquillity, or the success of your research, go on with your story."

" My father was born a gentleman. His parents having died when he was yet young, left him such a fortune as exempted him from the necessity of adopting any profession, or applying his mind to those studies that lead to distinction or consideration. He was a man of pleasure; and an easy complying disposition allowed him unlimited enjoyment of all those fashionable follies that seduce those who have time and money to waste upon them. A few years were sufficient to satiate him with such amusements as England affords, and at the

same time greatly diminish his fortune. Wanting new objects of excitement in proportion as his means of procuring them diminished, he sold his horses, dogs, and equipage, and set out for Paris, with a *valet de chambre*, who contrived to persuade him that he could only find the happiness he sought on that brilliant theatre of refinement, pleasure, and intrigue. When he arrived, his first moments were employed in taking a cursory view of such curiosities as the metropolis of the Continent contained ; not so much from any decided taste for the fine arts, as '*to have it to say*' that he was not quite ignorant that such things existed. His valet, a Parisian by birth, was his ciceroni, and, with the aid of a printed catalogue, made him familiar with the names of all the pictures, statues, and monuments of any celebrity. When a month's lounging had raised him in his own

opinion to the rank of a *virtuoso*, he again sunk into a state of apathy, and wished for society. To obtain this was no difficult task for his faithful and intelligent servant, in a city abounding with good-nature and hospitality; where titled graces are so condescending as to open their *salons* and *boudoirs* to strangers, and introduce them into circles of elegance and pleasure. My father had some very natural suspicions that the rank of his introducer was not such as could entitle him to hope for a very select or distinguished set of acquaintance, but all such scruples were removed by a card of invitation from the Baronne de la T—, to a ball on the following Tuesday. The same devoted and affectionate valet carried his disinterestedness so far, as to procure for his master such honest tradesmen, as made it ‘*a point of honour*’ never to charge more than ‘*le juste prix*’

of all the articles furnished ; so that, by way of recompensing his integrity, my father made him a present of the ten per cent. which he assured him was always paid by those who were recommended to good customers, and which constituted the legitimate profits of intermediate agents, whether they be servants or friends. Anxious to appear at the ball of Madame la Baronne in a manner corresponding with the idea he was told she had formed of '*my lor Anglais !*' he made preparations as if he were to be presented at court. A handsome equipage was hired, and a fashionable tailor and jeweller employed to decorate his person. He was announced with a ceremony suitable to his pretensions, and received by the lady of the house with flattering marks of distinction and cordiality. Two large drawing-rooms were open for dancing and card parties ; the latter, she

remarked with an air of pity, was the only resource of the old gentry who honoured her with their company. As to you, *mi lor*, I shall find you a more agreeable occupation, and more suited to your age. She took his arm, and led him about, naming to him the counts, barons, and generals who were of her intimate society, and who were then either dancing and talking *fleurette*, as she called it, to the young ladies, or playing at *bouillotte* at a large round table. My father thought himself the happiest Englishman in France, and his valet the cleverest fellow that ever twirled a curling iron. I use, reverend sir," said the sick woman, "the language I found after my poor father's death, in a manuscript sketch of his life, written long after the illusions of vanity had been dissipated by bitter experience, and maturer judgment. But to continue my story.

“ My father remarked, that there were many daughters, but few mothers at the ball ; for he could not imagine that three or four old women, the splendour of whose dress gave them an air of ridicule, could be the prolific matrons of such a crowd of grace and beauty as composed the dancing part of the assembly. These, he thought, might for the most part be young wives ; but among the men, there were few young enough to justify a belief, that they were the husbands of the young ladies ; and he ventured to express his wonder to the baroness, at this want of harmony in the splendid reunion he so much admired.

“ ‘ In France, *mi lor*, we are accustomed to these things. Young men have neither fortune nor inclination to enter into the expensive bonds of matrimony. They love liberty and pleasure until they are incapable of enjoying either ;

they then *establish themselves*, and become regular members of society. But you must know, *mi lor*, that a great number of these ladies are what we call first-rate artists, and are invited to our balls on account of their celebrity.'

" 'Would Madame la Baronne have the condescension to explain the meaning of the word *artist*, applied to creatures so fair, that we might suppose them to have escaped for the evening from the paradise of Mahomet ?'

" 'They are, indeed,' said the Baroness, smiling, 'inhabitants of an earthly paradise, whom we honour with our protection to decorate our balls and amuse our friends; they are selected from the opera and principal theatres. That lovely person on whom you seem to fix your attention is a *débutante*, with whom all Paris is enamoured; but she is very senti-

mental, and declares she reserves her affections for an Englishman, whenever chance may procure for her one of that romantic nation. Perhaps you would like to dance with her? She is a pupil of Vestris. Can any thing equal the grace and lightness of her movements?

“ My father did dance with her; she soon afterwards quitted the opera; and I am the offspring of their union. If I may judge from all the misfortunes that have befallen me, I am authorized to presume, that Providence visits the sins of the parents upon their children; for although I have no crime to charge upon my conscience, my whole life has been a series of calamity and suffering. My parents continued to visit the Baroness, and lived many years in the gay, thoughtless, and corrupt society of persons of her description. My mother was fond of dress, and lived expen-

sively ; my father lent money to the Baroness, which was never repaid ; he was cheated out of much larger sums at her card parties ; and when he had spent all his disposable funds, and found out that he had been duped, he was too honest to turn swindler and make dupes in his turn, although it was intimated to him that he might recover his losses by joining the confederacy of black legs who frequented her house, and whose real or assumed titles and rank placed them above the reach of suspicion.

“ Disgusted and penitent, my father quitted Paris, very much against the desire of my mother, who feared to perish of *ennui* in any atmosphere beyond the walls of her favourite city. The vapours of sea-coal, and the moral philosophy of an English fire-side, had terrors for her which she could not subdue ; but remittances failed, a total change in the domestic

economy of the family became indispensable, and they set out for London, where they hired a small house, and lived on the remnant of what had been a large fortune. In this abode they were both dissatisfied and soon unhappy. Deprived of their accustomed amusements, and unable to adopt any of a more rational description, their time was passed in mutual recrimination, each blaming the other for every privation that want of money and credit imposed upon them. My father insisted that he owed his degraded condition and loss of fortune to the folly and extravagance of his companion, while she reproached him with want of prudence and discernment, and thought the establishment he afforded her unworthy of her beauty and merit. I believe they would have separated had I not been a favourite with both, and by tears, caresses, and entreaties, made up their

daily quarrels. My father had respectable relations, who would neither make visits to our house, nor receive my mother; so that my parents had all the charges and inconveniences of the conjugal state, without any of its blessings or advantages. They lived in hostility with the moral and religious usages of society, and their path seemed to be traced through a desert, cold, sterile, and inhospitable.

“ As my father had not in his youth laid up any store of learning upon which solitude might draw for occupation or pleasure, all his enjoyments were material: he ate and drank as much and as luxuriously as his limited fortune would permit. He grew extremely plethoric and infirm; and although his sufferings admonished him that he was rapidly descending towards the tomb, he never seriously thought of futurity. He lived from day to day, seemingly

heedless of what might happen to himself or his family. When he had excruciating fits of the gout, he bore them with stoical patience, which he called courage; but he trembled at the idea of making a will, and appeared indifferent to the fate of his companion and her child. I was then too young to think of such matters, and my mother had lived in such habits of thoughtless improvidence, that she permitted my father to indulge his humour, provided the wants of the passing hour were satisfied. In this state time brought us to the last act of the drama; and the sudden death of my poor father closed the scene. One evening, after eating a hearty dinner, one of those scenes of domestic strife of which I had been so frequently an unhappy witness, worked up his anger to such a pitch, that in a paroxysm of passion he was deprived of

life by a violent determination of blood to the brain. Some time elapsed before the arrival of the doctor, whose attempts to restore life were fruitless. My grief and terror were unutterable, for I loved my father in spite of his failings; my mother alone seemed insensible to our loss. For a long time before his death she had taken to drinking strong coffee with an equal part of brandy; and this mixture, which she called *gloria*, was her principal consolation in her troubles of mind or body; in it she steeped both sorrow and sentiment, and exhibited a sad picture of the inevitable effects of a bad education and a vicious life."

Here the narrative was interrupted by the weakness of the woman. It will be resumed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

If ever you have look'd on better days ;
If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church ;
If ever sat at any good man's feast ;
If ever from your eye-lids wiped a tear,
And know what 'tis to pity and be pitied ;
Let gentleness my strong enforcement be.

As You LIKE IT.

There be that can pack the cards and yet cannot
play well.

LORD BACON'S ESSAYS.

“ MY father's relations were instantly made acquainted with his death ; but although they all inhabited the city, none of them came to his funeral. Indeed, the only person who took the

least interest in our sufferings, was a young man, whose manner, at least, was benevolent, and who had shown a great partiality for the society and conversation of my mother, during the few months he had been admitted to our society. He did all he could to console and advise us ; but I soon perceived that his friendship was not disinterested. His attentions to my mother were too familiar and assiduous not to shock and displease me ; and as my presence seemed irksome and disagreeable to them both, I was sent off to my bed with as little ceremony as a cat or a lap-dog, very often with a morsel of dry bread and cheese, while a warm supper was preparing, in the kitchen, to regale my mother and her friend Mr. Thornwood."

"There is a person of that name, not long since town major in this city ; it cannot surely be the same ?" said Father Leclerc.

"I should think not, reverend sir," said the sick woman :—" When he frequented our family, he was employed in a gaming-house, where my poor father was driven by domestic bickerings to pass many of his evenings. Soon after the death of my father, our affairs were in so bad a state, that Mr. Thornwood advised the sale of our furniture ; but before we had time to bring them to public auction, we received notice to quit our dwelling ; and a letter from the solicitor of my father's nearest relations threatened a criminal prosecution, if any articles belonging to the succession were sold by my mother's authority. Although these relations avoided our house during the life of my father, as if a pestilence reigned in it, they came, after his demise, and laid claim to every article it contained. Mr. Thornwood made a show of resistance, was treated with as little ceremony as my mother,

and seemed disinclined to expose himself seriously for her sake. Little cause as I had to respect my mother, and much as her conduct incensed me, I could not help feeling more on her account than my own. I sought to console her, but found neither tenderness nor sensibility in her heart. Several projects were examined and abandoned for our future support ; but so little time was given us to quit our abode, that before any plan could be formed, we found ourselves, at the moment, become a charge to the parish. My mother, with the hard-heartedness that is not always found among women of disorderly life, gave me understand, that she was not in the least degree embarrassed with her person ; that Mr. Thornwood had kindly proposed his lodging as a temporary asylum, but could not take charge of us both ; and as I had strength and talents to make my way in the

world, as she had done at my age, I must contrive to shift for myself as I could. I understood her meaning; and as a longer residence with her and her new friend alarmed my conscience, and filled me with despair and humiliation, I packed up the few things I possessed, and marched out into the street, while the officers of justice were occupied in making an inventory of the furniture. I proceeded with rapid steps, insensible to all that was passing around me in the streets, until I found myself breathless and tired, near the corner of an alley leading to Charing Cross, which I suddenly recollected to be that in which our shoemaker lived. I had had so few opportunities of knowing or conversing with any persons of my own sex, that I was always kind to the wife of this poor tradesman, whenever she brought shoes to our house; and now in my forlorn state I en-

tered her dwelling with confidence. It was composed of two rooms in a mean-looking, ruined house; in one of these her husband worked, and she cooked their humble meals; the other served as a sleeping-room for them and three ragged children, with just light enough to show the “variety of wretchedness” of which its furniture was composed. I told my tale as briefly as possible, claimed momentary protection, and, opening my bundle, besought the poor woman to sell or pawn such articles of my little stock, as might be sufficient to support me until I could find employment. Tears filled her eyes, as she listened to my tale; and she looked wistfully at her husband, as if to communicate to his breast that sympathy which swelled her own. The man was beating a piece of leather; and his hammer was raised as I commenced my story; his hand sunk gently as I continued,

and when I concluded by soliciting to be harboured for the night, he laid aside his work, rose from his seat, and approached me, with an expression of pity in his rough features, that I shall never forget.

“ ‘ Miss,’ said he, with the resolute tone of a plain, unsophisticated Englishman, ‘ if so be as our poor place be fit for such a person as you be, in God’s name, make such use as you will on it. Ye’ll be as safe here as in a castle.’

“ ‘ And safer too,’ I replied, ‘ since you are so good as to take me under your protection.’

“ ‘ Ye can sleep with my wife, ma’am, and I’ll make a shake down for myself in this here shop.’

“ The dinner of this poor family was bread and cheese; and I sent the wife to the huxter’s shop to buy some coals and other articles with a few shillings that remained in my possession,

of pocket-money I had accidentally kept. The evening was cold, and we all enjoyed the luxury of a good fire. It was a luxury to this poor family; privation had made it so; and the children showed it by their extreme repugnance to quit it for a cold ill-covered bed of flocks as hard nearly as a board. This shoemaker laboured hard, yet scarcely earned enough to keep his family alive; nevertheless, had I been indelicate enough to become an additional charge to them, they would have starved with me without a murmur, so sacred did they deem the claims of my youth, sex, and misfortunes. But I was determined not to be surpassed in generosity. I had received little presents of rings and jewels from my father on my birthday every year; and when I had sold and spent in this poor family the better part of my wardrobe, I pawned these little memorials of

paternal tenderness, rather than diminish the scanty stock of my host. I tended the children, and kept the house in order, so as to leave the poor woman more time to bind the shoes her husband made. In short, I did every thing in my power to assist rather than encumber them. I went every day to those offices where people undertake to procure places for servants, in the hope of finding for my labours food and shelter; some families found me too weak to do the work, others too handsome to be a housemaid, and many rejected my application with a significant shake of the head, adding, that if I could give a good account of myself they would see about it. I was once nearly placed with a book-binder; but as I was too young to be my own mistress, he said I must furnish a certificate from my parents, that I went into his service with their consent.

When I told him, without disguise, that my father was dead, and my mother had turned me adrift, he coldly replied, ‘Young woman, there must be something wrong in your conduct to be cast off by your mother.’ I did not choose to remove his objections by accusing my mother, and lost this opportunity of placing myself. Repulsed by scruples of one kind or another, and reduced to my last morsel of bread, I allowed despair to take entire possession of me, and resolved to retire into some secret spot, where, unobserved, death might come to my aid. I wandered about without knowing where to direct my steps.

“ Seeing a church-door open, I entered it hastily, and hid myself in an obscure corner, where I hoped to remain a few days and nights, and die of hunger. The sanctity of the place seemed favourable to the execution of my plan,

and I felt inspired with a hope, that God would judge this last act of my life with pity and indulgence. But this, like my other projects, failed. I soon perceived that the church-door had been opened to prepare for a marriage ceremony about to take place ; and while I sat trembling in a corner of that temple where so many well-dressed and happy people entered, the joy and satisfaction of the scene only confirmed me in the resolution to seek eternal repose. I prayed earnestly that my suffering might be of short duration ; but I was perceived at the moment the doors were about to be closed, and turned into the street.

“ I retraced my steps towards the dwelling of my poor friends ; and on my way an idea entered my mind, which was the fruitful source of all the events that have befallen me since. It was late before I reached my humble lodg-

ing. As I entered the lane I saw a crowd listening to a ballad-singer, who sold a considerable number of copies of a song that seemed much to suit the taste of his auditory. I played well on the piano, and had a very fine voice; and it occurred to me, that an exhibition of my talents in some fashionable quarter of the town might procure, at least, temporary relief. I found my friends anxiously waiting for me; and when I communicated my project was happy to perceive that they did not disapprove of it. Dull and sick at heart as I was, I sang several airs to give my friends a specimen of my power, which so astonished them, that the good wife clapped her hands with joy; so little suffices to give joy to the wretched, in whose heart hope always stands ready to embellish with flattering colours every little untried scheme. The husband seemed

thoughtful; and when I urged him to give his opinion he said,

“ ‘ I fear, ma’am, as how, ye’ll be exposed; but let me see:—I’ll go we ye and see as no harm come, while Molly gets a little summat for supper.’ ”

“ The evening was fine; the moon shone bright; I wrapped myself in what had been a cloak, and concealed my head and face in an old bonnet that Molly had discarded. I set forth with my humble but faithful squire, and stopped in Hanover Square, where I stood a chance of finding a better class of amateurs than in the crowded, commercial quarters of the city. My style of singing, and the power of my voice, soon attracted a considerable audience; and while I paused to exchange my ballads for half-pence, I heard many observations that convinced me my disguise did not deceive all the

listeners. Several came close to me and sought to examine my features; many said, this is no regular ballad-singer. One person listened with great attention, came near, and seemed desirous to question me. I felt a little alarmed, and looked at my protector; my confidence returned, and I continued boldly to sing and sell my ballads. My stock was nearly exhausted, when the gentleman, who seemed so much pleased with my performance, demanded a ballad, giving me in return half-a-crown. I said, ‘Sir, I have not sufficient change to return to you.’ ‘No matter,’ he replied, ‘I have received pleasure for half-a-crown in listening to you;—you are of a higher order than your dress imports, and are probably singing for a wager. If, on the contrary, it be distress and poverty that bring you on such a theatre, give me your address and I will assist you.’ This momentary

suspension produced a clamour among the crowd; and as I did not choose to satisfy a curiosity of which I could not conjecture the motive, I continued to sing, and sold my last ballad. As I was leaving the theatre on which I acted the first scene of what I may call the drama of my life, I took the arm of, and clung to, the shoemaker from a sentiment of terror, of which I could not render myself an account, and did not feel quite at ease until we reached our lodging. The fruits of my labour, after deducting the value of the ballads, amounted to five shillings and four-pence, which I triumphantly spread upon the table, exclaiming, ‘God is merciful; we shall not want food while I can sing.’

“I cannot, reverend sir, describe the pleasure I felt and diffused in this little family. They had identified themselves with my misfortunes

and my success. We all made a hearty meal, and slept as soundly as if our beds had been of down, and our covering of Angola wool ; so entirely does a contented mind supply wants which riches alone are supposed by those who have never tasted adversity to supply. The following morning I renewed my stock of ballads, sat down to bind shoes, and care seemed banished from our family circle. The children played, the father sang as he laboured : well might we say,

‘ Song softens toil, however rude the sound.’

The evening found me equipped, and on the field of action. Alas ! reverend sir, it was to me as important a field, as that which often decides the fate of a general ; since my victory so essentially depended upon the choice of position. A crowd was soon collected, renewed

curiosity was busy, and the same gentleman who had given me the half-crown, stepped out of a hotel in front of which I was placed, and after listening some minutes, asked for a ballad, and slipped a guinea into my hand with these words—‘*You are unfortunate!*’ I thought then, and am still of opinion, that Providence has given to the tones of the voice a secret power over human passion. I excited the pity of more than one by-stander. Instead of half-pence that I supposed I had taken for my ballads, I found several shillings in the mass of my evening receipts. I now seriously began to think my independence assured. At a family council it was decided that we might allow ourselves a little meat and soup, the more necessary, it was urged, as I looked pale and exhausted, and that my health and strength were a mine of gold. Molly was accordingly sent to market

to purchase a leg of beef. When she returned, I found she had, in imitation of more illustrious administrators, used her own discretion, and made considerable additional charges to the sum voted in council. Upon my expressing my fears that she had gone beyond the sober limits prescribed by our finances, she smiled and looked mysterious. Her husband asked in a rough tone, whether such poor folk could afford to eat fowls and fish ; insisted that Molly's head was turned, and that he would go back to the market and exchange them there delicate things for more solid and less expensive food. This peremptory language brought out the secret. A gentleman had heard me sing, was disposed to be useful to me, and would find a more profitable employment for my musical talents, than that which distress and poverty had obliged me to adopt. This gentleman had

followed me from Hanover Square to my lodgings the previous evening, and was on his way this morning to make more particular inquiries respecting me, when he met Molly going to market, who finding him, as she declared, a very civil and kind gentleman, made him acquainted with my history, only embroidering certain details of it in such a manner, as to inspire his interest and curiosity to know me personally. She was, however, reserved enough to refuse him an interview until my own consent could be obtained, although she did not refuse the ample supply of provisions with which his generosity loaded her basket. He ordered her to supply all my necessary wants, settled my allowance at two guineas a week, until he could otherwise find me profitable employment, and gave her in advance two guineas, which she laid before me on the table, as a proof of her

skill in conducting the incident to a positive issue."

"He was a benevolent and charitable man," said Father Leclerc. "I believe in London there are many of this description, who go about doing good, and employing large fortunes to useful purposes without ostentation or noise."

"He was not an Englishman, reverend sir, neither was his fortune considerable; Mr. Bertinval, my benefactor, was a native of this country."

"Mr. Bertinval!" said the priest, raising his hands, and showing such marks of wonder, as roused the narrator as if she had received an electric shock.

"O reverend sir! do you know Mr. Bertinval?—do you know my unfortunate husband?—is he living?—can I not see him before my eyes are closed in death?"

The highly-excited state of mind of the poor woman admonished the priest to be circumspect, and he replied with affected composure, that there was a gentleman of that name in Canada, at some distance from Montreal, but he could not suppose it possible that he could be the person to whom she alluded. "But go on calmly with your story, my daughter," said the priest, who, as our readers will readily believe, was now deeply interested in learning all the particulars.

After a few minutes' pause she continued. "He left his address with the wife of the shoemaker, and directed her to call regularly for the sum he had promised. At the expiration of a fortnight, he informed her that he had found a family, where I might enter on very advantageous conditions to instruct children in the rudiments of music, if I were duly qualified;

but, in order to judge of my qualifications, and be enabled to answer for my ability, he must witness my execution of some preliminary pieces upon the piano.

" This demand was natural and reasonable ; and as it did not seem to result from any idle curiosity, we all agreed that I was bound to comply with it, and as soon as possible cease to tax his bounty. I put on my best clothes, and, accompanied by Mrs. Giles, went to his lodgings. He received me with great kindness ; appeared to take a deep interest in my misfortunes ; made me repeat a great deal of what he had already learned from Mrs. Giles, and finished encouraging assurances of support and protection, by requesting me to play on a piano which he had hired on purpose, with some music with which I was familiar. My anxiety to show my little talents to advantage was so

great that I was confused ; and after various attempts which were far from successful, my fingers became as disobedient to my wishes as if they had been paralysed. I shed tears of disappointment. He seemed conscious of the true cause of my failure, and requested me to come with Mrs. Giles and dine with him, assuring me that it was only the novelty of my situation that for the moment deprived me of the power to do justice to myself. He addressed himself rather to Mrs. Giles than to me. She readily consented, and as her presence authorized my compliance, it was agreed that we should return the next day at six o'clock. We again put on our holiday clothes ; and as I had seriously reproached myself with the puerility of my behaviour at my first interview, I went the second time with a firm resolution to give proofs of my capacity. On arriving, I was not a

little astonished and disconcerted to find Mr. Thornwood in the room. I had conceived for this man so great an aversion, that the first view of him prompted me to pull Mrs. Giles by the sleeve, and retreat precipitately. She did not entirely comprehend my motives, but attributing my timidity to the presence of a stranger, continued to advance. At first Mr. Thornwood did not appear to recognize me, and called his friend into another room, probably to learn by what accident I had found my way to the house. In a few minutes they returned, and Mr. Thornwood saluted me as an old acquaintance, with as much kindness of manner as if he had not contributed to my distress and humiliation. He looked guilty, and my haughty reserve increased his embarrassment. The desire to learn what had become of my mother at length unsealed my lips ;

and after a little general conversation, he informed me that she had met with an ancient companion of the French opera, who persuaded her to return to Paris, in the hope of obtaining some humble employment in the company of the celebrated De Vismes, who had known and admired her when young. Her taste for her ancient '*metier*' had, he said, revived ; and she set out with the delight one usually feels to return to one's early haunts and amusements after a long absence in a distant land.

" If it pleased Providence to permit that unfortunate woman to lead a life that rendered her insensible to her duty towards her child, I assure you, reverend sir, that her example was a good preservative lesson to me in all my trials. I formed an irrevocable resolution to avoid all the faults I discovered in her ; and now that the hand of sickness, perhaps of

death, presses heavily upon me, I bless God to have been able to persist in it. We dined, or rather feasted, after the humble fare Mrs. Giles and I had been for some time accustomed to.

"The conversation ran upon various plans suggested for my benefit; and as nothing definitive was decided, Mr. Bertinval entered into family details with Mrs. Giles, for the purpose of removing to a better lodging, and assisting her husband with a little capital to carry on his trade. I was delighted to find that this poor family stood a chance of being rewarded for the kindness I had received; and by degrees my courage and confidence were renewed. I lost that tremulous, humble tone, and those fears that beset me during my former visit. I played several difficult pieces, sang with a full and varied voice, and succeeded to the utmost of

my wishes. My protector was all delight, applauded me to the skies, declared he had never tasted such a musical treat, and assured me that with such gifts, from nature and cultivation, I could not fail to make myself independent. At my age it is a common weakness to believe every thing that flatters vanity, and my heart swelled with joy and hope

CHAPTER VI.

When you engage with those that sling,
Your thoughtless head may feel the blow ;
So when the hostile shaft you wing,
Beware what aim you give the foe.

GULISTAN.

“ I FELT the most profound gratitude for patronage so generously bestowed, and a security in the purity of Mr. Bertinval’s intentions that had no limits. He permitted us to depart at an early hour, and gave Mrs. Giles money to redeem the articles I had left in the pawn-broker’s office. During several weeks, I heard nothing more of the family in which I was to be

placed; but I wanted for nothing. My board and lodging was regularly paid; and I became so accustomed to this state of dependence, that I insensibly滑入 a belief, that the interest my protector felt for me, assured me against future want. I often dined at his house, without my friend Mrs. Giles; and my society seemed so necessary to his happiness, that vague notions of ambition sometimes flitted through my mind. These, however, were speedily dissipated by a regular declaration of love, and a proposition to live with him. He had become sufficiently acquainted with my principles, in general conversation, to be aware of the difficulty of overcoming my scruples, although I could not altogether conceal my attachment to him. These he sought to remove by a promise of marriage at a distant period; alleging the impossibility of forming such an engagement

during the life of an uncle, on whom he was in a great measure dependent, and who would deprive him of the inheritance he expected, if he should venture to marry without his consent. His friend Thornwood often dined with us, and joined his influence to the reasons urged by Mr. Bertinval, in order to persuade me to adopt the plan he proposed. I urged the unhappy fate of my mother; the horror I felt of living in a state reproved by morality, religion, and society; the self-humiliation that must accompany me through life; and the reproaches of my conscience, from which I could never hope to escape. All these he combated with such arguments as were far from convincing me; and I began to feel that this pleasing episode in the drama of my life would not be of long duration. His solicitations were so frequently renewed, and so firmly resisted, that he became impatient; and admiring

perhaps, a virtue that was strong enough to resist the importunity of a lover, and the fear of misery and want, he consented to marry me, provided I would keep it a secret from the world, and live retired and unknown to his acquaintance. To this I made no objection. I loved him enough to make any sacrifice that would not deprive me of my own esteem. It was accordingly settled, that Mrs. Giles and Mr. Thornwood should be the only persons in our confidence, and that the ceremony should be performed by one of those priests who dispense with the publication of the bans."

"Unworthy and discarded members of our community," said Father Leclerc, "who live in a state of reprobation, and second the intentions of those whose deeds will not bear the light."

"Well, reverend sir, we all went to one of those clergymen; he lived on the Surrey side of

the Thames, and at his house I was joined in wedlock to Mr. Bertinval. I was just eighteen the day of my marriage. I was so happy, that I almost forgot my past misery ; or if I thought of it at all, only considered it as a trial of my virtue, and a means which Providence employed to lead me to the consummation of all I could reasonably desire. I little suspected that futurity had so much trouble in reserve to punish my vanity, and change the cup of pleasure into bitterness. I took an affectionate leave of those who had harboured me in my distress. I gave them all I could bestow, and promised much more that I have not been able to perform. The first week of our marriage, my husband never left me alone. His friend Thornwood came to dine with him every day, and seemed to participate in our happiness. He was delighted with the prospect of quitting an employ-

ment that he deemed beneath his capacity, and entering the army, in which some high acquaintance, made at the gaming-house, had obtained a commission for him. The idea of being an officer and, *of course*, *a gentleman*, almost turned his brain; and he even talked of patronising my husband, and obtaining for him some high situation in his native colony, through the influence of one of his gambling friends, who was a friend of a clerk in the colonial department. I soon discovered that the state of my husband's finances made him solicitous to employ his time profitably. He had claims on the support of many persons who had been treated by him with great hospitality at Montreal, when he first came into possession of his patrimony; and who, independently of good dinners and good wine, had borrowed money from him, which they were in no haste to refund.

My time was much occupied in writing fair copies of memorials to ministers, and letters to aides-de-camps of generals who had served in Canada. Many who had been mere table companions, left their cards at our door; but those who lay under pecuniary obligations to my husband, never even deigned to answer his letters. We incurred many debts, and no remittances arrived from Canada. We were perpetually harassed with demands for sums we could not pay; and after exhausting the patience of our creditors, were compelled to lock our door, and live like persons besieged, from an apprehension of bailiffs entering our dwelling. Thronwood was the only person who was admitted. He always came after sunset, and passed his time with my husband in making calculations on the chances of cards. Our dining table was covered with a green cloth, on which were

figured compartments of red and black, in imitation, I was told, of the gaming-table, on which my husband was to find resources in our present exigency. When these studies were finished, they usually went out together, and my husband seldom returned until three or four in the morning. Chance or skill sometimes favoured him ; and he came home with his pockets filled with gold. He was then gay and happy ; and by way of indemnifying me for the loss of his society, made me presents of jewels and trinkets, which were often sold, for half their cost, to raise money for new chances, when fortune had turned against him. Time convinced him that nothing could be permanently secured by gaming ; and, in spite of the lessons of his friend Thornwood, the little stock of money we possessed when we were married was lost past redemption, and despair took possession of our

fire-side. This passion, destructive of all others, had so entirely taken hold of his faculties, that he lost his taste for every ordinary enjoyment. My voice, which had greatly improved, had ceased to charm, or even amuse him ; my piano was neglected at first, and afterwards, from motives of economy, returned to the shop where it had been hired ; our servants left us, because they were badly fed, and stood no chance of receiving their wages ; and although it was near the time of the birth of my child, I performed all the domestic work with alacrity and resignation. Mr. Thornwood had ceased to visit us, and I soon afterwards learned that he had joined the regiment in which he had obtained a commission. We continued nearly two years in this miserable state, living on small supplies of money my husband received from a relation in Canada, whose name he always con-

cealed from me ; and every day “ living on hope, promise crammed,” until we were convinced that

Hope was the dream of a man wide awake.*

I cannot with justice reproach my husband with ill-treatment, although he was often sullen, peevish, and insensible to my tenderness ; but this was the result of embarrassment and disappointment. A letter received from Mr. Thornwood, dated at Montreal, roused him from the lethargy into which he had fallen. He did not show it to me, but assured me it gave him great expectations of fortune in Canada, and strongly urged me to go into lodgings near Chelsea, and wait patiently his return. He sold his watch, and every thing of value we

* La speme è il sogno d'un uomo svegliato.

Italian Proverb.

possessed, and placed me in a humble but respectable boarding-house, with my child, where I fixed myself without murmuring. We were doubly linked by this child in a common destiny, and I had no doubt he would do every thing in his power to support us. A captain of one of the ships in the fur-trade, whom he had known at Montreal in the days of his prosperity, gave him a free passage; and to this humane and generous man am I indebted for a similar service. It is now a year since we parted; and I know not whether he be dead or alive, as I have never since received a line from him. I need not add to this long and painful narrative, all I suffered in a house where I was a stranger, unable to pay for my board, and without any letters from my husband to satisfy my host that I was not abandoned, and fraudulently placed as a charge upon his industry;

but he was a father, and agreed to keep my boy in pledge for my return with the means of satisfying his just claims on me. Judge, reverend sir, of my unhappy situation ; and if it were not for my child how cheerfully I would welcome death."

Father Leclerc spoke words of consolation to this interesting and unfortunate woman ; assured her of aid and protection, and promised to exert himself to discover her husband's residence which he had internally no doubt was at the Lake of the Two Mountains, although he thought it expedient to proceed with circumspection to ascertain the fact. He accordingly wrote the following letter to Bertinval :—

" SIR,

" An unfortunate and interesting woman in the last stage of an incurable malady, to whom

I was called to afford the consolations of my ministry, has arrived from England in quest of her husband, and now resides at the inn of Jean Baptiste Tellier in the suburbs of Montreal. She is known to your friend Thornwood, and calls herself Madame Bertinval ; but having enjoined me to keep her name a secret, I make this communication to you only. I have obtained from the charitable fund of the seminary the means of supporting her until it may please divine Providence either to restore her to health, or remove her from a world where her virtues and sufferings give her a claim to that repose, which has been denied to her from her birth up to the present hour. During the month I am about to pass at the seminary, secluded from the affairs of this world, I take the liberty to recommend her to your charity, if she

have no stronger title to your sympathy and care.

“ LE CLERC.”

A few hours after this letter had been sent to the post-office, a messenger arrived at the seminary to inform him that the sick person had passed a few restless hours, and breathed her last sigh without a struggle.

“ God rest her soul !” said the good priest, crossing himself.

The information he had received was of so much importance to his beloved friends at the Lake of the Two Mountains, that he committed it to writing, and deposited the paper in the hands of the superior. He deemed this the more important, as he was suspected by the Baron d'Argenteuil of strong prejudices against his

nephew; and although his virtues placed him above the imputation of fabricating a story on purpose to injure him, he judged it prudent to give every possible authenticity to the event of which he was a witness. Having thus discharged his duty, he retired to his cell, where we shall leave him, and return to the Lake of the Two Mountains.

The priest absent, Matilda was deprived of her friend and counsellor, and the hopes of Bertinval renewed, that he might urge his suit with more chance of succeeding. The baron also partook of this conviction, and resolved to dispose definitively of the question that had so long remained unsettled. He called his family together to communicate to them the disposition he had made of his fortune by his last will, and solemnly engaged his daughter not to trouble the last days of his life with any farther

opposition. Matilda was deeply affected with the peremptory manner of her father. The desire to comply with the wishes of a parent who had so entirely devoted himself to her happiness, and her resolution not to marry her cousin, produced a painful conflict in her mind. She looked to her aunt for aid in this crisis; but Madame de Belrose bestowed no look of encouragement. The baron observed this, and appealed also to her.

“ Speak, sister. Have I not, as a good father and a prudent man, prepared for my children here present an establishment that will secure their happiness and the honour of my house?”

“ You have, indeed, brother, done every thing in your power, and if they be not satisfied, it is not your fault. When I married General De Belrose, I was not consulted by my parents;

but now-a-days children will have their own way: they are, as I have always said, brought up to do as they please, and not as their parents counsel them."

"In what manner have I merited this unkind, and I may say, unjust reproach?" said Matilda. "I have never opposed the will of my father in any thing. In all things I have sought to please him. I admit his unreserved right to dispose of his fortune. I have not a word to say as to the mode he may judge expedient to employ to provide for my future independence; but I trust in God, that the period when I may become mistress of any part of my father's fortune is still far distant. Nothing proves to my satisfaction, that I shall outlive him. Should such a calamity be reserved for me by Providence, I shall not trouble my cousin with any importunity respecting the condition that makes us joint heirs."

"It is not thus, my daughter, that I intended to arrange matters, when by my testament I appointed you joint heirs of the house of D'Argenteuil. You well know that my desire has been to unite you in marriage, and by this suitable alliance keep my fortune in my own family. Unless you consent to this, all my plans will be rendered abortive."

"I am not prepared to speak on this matter," replied Matilda. "The only thing I can call my own is my person, and this I am not inclined to bestow on my cousin."

Bertinval felt wounded at this abrupt refusal, and insinuated that he should be sorry to obtain by the authority of his uncle, that which perhaps might be claimed by another.

Matilda could not parry this stroke: she remained silent. The baron was dreadfully agitated. He was not accustomed to be thwarted,

and he plainly saw that it was too late to recoil. He saw his estate divided, new alliances formed by his nephew and daughter, and the name and honours of his house extinct. His colour changed, his irritation increased by the reflection that his family would be dispersed, and his estates sold immediately after his death. He made a long pause, as much to recover his spirits from this shock, as to reflect upon the course he ought to pursue. He resumed: “ If you mean, Matilda, to remain single until my death leaves you free, then divide the inheritance with your cousin, and marry whomsoever you please, I am bound to declare that such is not my will, and that you would only trifle with me to allow me to leave this world without the consolation of knowing that such a disastrous event is impossible. You must accept the husband I have chosen for you, whilst

I am yet well enough to receive comfort and consolation from your promise."

Large drops fell from her eyes; her heart was ready to break; she sunk back in her chair in an agony of despair. At length, summoning up all her courage, she replied—
“ When my father disposed of my person, he no doubt took it for granted that I had no judgment to exercise, no taste to be consulted, no antipathies to overcome. Now I am required to bind myself to an arrangement more awful to me than life and death, and yet am denied the faculty of a moral agent. I am required to go before the altar and call God to witness, that I voluntarily take for my husband a man who is forced upon me; that I shall love, honour, and obey him, whilst I can neither desire nor intend to perform any part of such a vow. If, when laying your com-

mands upon me, you could communicate the moral feeling indispensable to the due execution, I might make to paternal authority the sacrifice that depended only on my will; but can I swear to love a person who inspires neither tenderness nor affection? can I honour him unless I believe him to be brave, loyal, and virtuous? If the dreadful alternative of committing an act of disobedience, or violating all my moral and religious principles, be the only choice left to me, I am prepared to decide and leave my fate to Heaven. But I most humbly supplicate a father who has always loved me, who has in all things sought to make me happy, and to whose precepts and example I am indebted for whatever virtues I possess, not to urge me to say more, but to leave to time and the developement of events to determine for me. I will not disguise my ap-

prehension that this may doom me to single blessedness, but if this be a misfortune, it will not be without a corresponding consolation—I shall be at peace with my own conscience, which will not reproach me with hypocrisy. To my cousin I owe truth and candour; I feel towards him none of those sentiments that would qualify me to become his wife."

"All these," retorted the baron, "are very good reasons to place in a romance, but wholly inapplicable to the common interests of life. The obligations imposed by the sacrament of marriage are not to be construed with such inflexible adherence to truth, as to render such alliances in nine cases out of ten impossible: a sincere intention to perform faithfully the duties of a wife, is all that religion and morality require. If young women were only to wed those whom they conscientiously love and

honour, and are determined to obey, we should find a much greater number of old maids in the world, lamenting the scruples of conscience that had deprived them of being happy wives and respectable mothers. Besides, marriage is as much a civil as a religious institution, in which something more than the taste and inclination of the contracting parties must be consulted. My intention is to see you settled before I leave the world, and I know of but two modes of doing it, that which I have proposed, or fixing you in the convent of the Black Nuns at Montreal."

"If I am to be reduced to that alternative," said Matilda, "my choice is made." She then retreated precipitately from the presence of her family, determined to be faithful to her engagement with Eustace, and sacrifice her liberty to her integrity.

"I always told you, brother," said Madame de Belrose, "that girls ought to be educated without ever hearing a word spoken of love. Those who read romances think that a husband must be a species of hero, and the consequence is, that the first man who has the art to touch their heart and heat their imagination, is immediately decorated with all the attributes of perfection. How often have I said to dear Mademoiselle de Clermont, when she spoke in such raptures of that prosing, philosophical Duke de Melun——"

"Dear sister," said the baron, with a tone of impatience, "let us leave Chantilly, and the affairs of the Condé family, and occupy ourselves with the house of Argenteuil. What is to be done with this obstinate girl? We shall never obtain her consent to marry you, my dear nephew, unless Father Leclerc can per-

suade her, that it is her first duty to obey her father and preserve the happiness of her family.”

“ I am too sensible of your goodness, my dear uncle,” said Bertinval, “ to urge you to any new effort on my behalf. The confessor of Matilda is unfriendly to me: since I have been in your house he has not shown me common courtesy; and if I might form a conjecture as to the counsel he would give my cousin, it would be to take the veil rather than obey you.”

“ He could not—he dare not,” said the baron, measuring the room with hastened steps. “ Besides I am master of my fortune, and since rebellion must be punished, I know how to employ the means. I have left you joint heirs: if she take the veil she becomes dead in law, and you inherit all my fortune after my death. Here is my will, and by h——n I will not revoke it.”

Bertinval bent on his knee, took the paper from his uncle's hand, which he kissed with every appearance of respect for his decision and gratitude for his generosity. Still he expressed his distress at the event of which he said he was the innocent cause, and assured the baron, that he only considered himself the depositary of a fortune, which should always be at the disposal of Matilda. He was, nevertheless, well pleased with the game he had so successfully played, and of which the baron was so completely the dupe. There was now but one thing wanting to the entire consummation of his wishes,—the death of his uncle. He knew he had the engagement of a man who never gave such a pledge without due consideration. But he might live long enough to repent; he might come to the knowledge of secrets that might change his opinion of his

nephew; he might even yield to a return of tenderness for his daughter. These reflections tormented him; we shall see the fruit they produced in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

Thou mine of bounty, how would'st thou have paid
My better service, when my turpitude
Thou dost so crown with gold?

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

HAMLET.

OUR readers will recollect the position that Bertinval had chosen near his uncle, and the unworthy part he had engaged himself to act when he fixed his abode at the castle. His correspondence with the colonial government had given him complete power over the liberty

of the baron, and he had only to suggest the necessity of arresting him, in order to remove him from his home, and deprive him of all communication with his family and friends. Up to the present hour, no motive of self-interest could urge him to the commission of such an act of infamy. He had a prospect of being united to his cousin, of possessing her fortune, of relieving himself from his embarrassments. The definitive refusal of Matilda was rather an advantage to him, since it did not deprive him of the only thing he sought; and now his uncle alone stood in his way. The health of the baron was feeble, but he might still linger on; and if before his death he came to the discovery of the true situation of his nephew, this worse than Joseph Surface might be cast off with shame, to struggle with poverty and infamy.

While these possible events passed in review before his eyes, he received the letter from Father Leclerc, announcing the arrival¹ of his wife at Montreal. It is impossible to describe the dismay and trouble that took possession of his mind. In the first paroxysm of despair, he felt disposed to cast himself and his troubles into the lake; but reflecting that the seclusion of the priest would last a month, he thought he had time to mature some better plan. All that depravity and cowardice could suggest, presented themselves by turns to his imagination. He resolved to deny the claims of his wife; but then she had her certificate of marriage, and Thornwood might be appealed to as one of the witnesses present at the ceremony. In short, he saw no safety but in the destruction of his benefactor!—In the weak state of the baron's health, any unexpected

calamity might precipitate him into the grave; and the wretched Bertinval conceived, that time pressed him towards an abyss, that could only be filled by himself or his uncle. He dispatched a letter to the Governor, urging the importance of arresting and keeping the baron in close confinement; pleaded the necessity of the case to the tranquillity of the province, and the salutary example that would not fail to strike terror into the hearts of the seditious; promised proofs and documents among the baron's papers, that would be forthcoming in due time to justify rigorous measures; and ended by lamenting, that an imperious call of duty and loyalty compelled him to sacrifice his private affection. Bertinval had the atrocity, without the energy of a full-blooded assassin. He saw his uncle dragged from his sick chamber with as little ceremony as if he were a

common malefactor. Night was chosen for this deed of horror, lest a sudden rising of the inhabitants might prevent its execution ; and he embraced the old man with all the hypocritical tenderness that was necessary to inspire confidence in a sympathy that was a stranger to his heart, assuring him at parting, that as soon as he could console his daughter and aunt, he would hasten to Quebec to claim an investigation, and assert his uncle's innocence.

It is impossible to describe the affliction of Matilda. She was seized with convulsive fits, that menaced her life ; and when they were passed, a raging fever succeeded, which for a considerable time deprived her of her senses. In the aberrations of her mind she called upon De Courcy, upon Bellegarde, to aid her to rescue her father. She demanded her arms

and hunting dress, and it was with difficulty she was kept in her chamber. When Bertinval presented himself to inquire after her health, she screamed with an instinctive horror, that almost persuaded the guilty wretch that she was not ignorant of his secret. The skill of the old family physician and the care of her aunt, soon subdued the violence of the fever, and in three weeks after the arrest of her father she was able to execute the only project her affection could suggest for his advantage. She determined to follow him to Quebec, and solicit a judicial investigation of the cause of his confinement. A carriage was prepared, and such articles as she might want packed up. She refused the proffered aid of Bertinval ; and as Bellegarde had just arrived with letters from De Courcy, she resolved that he should be her only escort as far as Montreal, where she could take counsel from Father Leclerc.

Our readers will recollect that a day or two before De Courcy was taken prisoner by the Americans, he sent off the brave and faithful Bellegarde to learn the cause of the long silence of Matilda, whose correspondence had been intercepted by Bertinval, through the agency of the post-master at St. Ann, who had been placed there on purpose to aid the espionage of his chief. The presence of this partisan of the house of Argenteuil, and the letters from De Courcy, of which he was the bearer, infused new life into the noble daughter, and renewed all the energy of her nature. She set forth on her journey with an air of confidence that astonished her aunt and disconcerted Bertinval, who lost no time in forwarding a letter to the Governor, to inform him of the intentions of Matilda, and the steps she might take to obtain the liberty of her father, who

would, he remarked, return with increased disaffection, to a population already disposed to second any measure hostile to the interest of the government.

Matilda stopped at Montreal to communicate her distress to Father Leclerc. As the month of seclusion of the good priest had not expired, she had some difficulty in obtaining a moment's conversation with him. He could only give tears to her sorrows ; he counselled her to be calm and resigned, to place her trust in Providence, and proceed cautiously until he could join her at Quebec, which he promised to do in a few days. As she approached the town, where her father was deprived of his liberty, the aspect of the walls and gates, and all that apparatus of defence that every fortified place presents to the view, chilled her blood, and gave her forebodings of evil ;—but Bellegarde, who

had once accompanied the baron to it, and had rendered himself an account of the bastions, curtins, and outworks, calmed her apprehensions, and made her understand that it was only a vast prison, where the inhabitants walked about freely until a certain hour in the evening, when military regulations easily observed, obliged them to be within the gates, unless they chose to sleep in the open fields. He conducted her to a good inn, where Mrs Holmes, a kind-hearted Englishwoman, gave her such a cordial welcome, as those who have money in their pockets can hope to receive only at an inn.

The state prison was not distant, and Bellegarde presented himself at the gate to inquire whether the daughter of the Baron of Argenteuil could be admitted to see her father.
“ Not without an order from the Governor-

General," was the only answer he could obtain.

Matilda passed the night restless and anxious, meditating on the measures most likely to insure her admittance. She resolved to make an appeal to the Governor-General either to release her father, or permit her to share his captivity. She was told that her best plan would be to wait on the provincial secretary, and seek, through his mediation, an audience with the representative of majesty. She had frequently heard this important personage spoken of as the supreme director of the ostensible chief, who contented himself with the honours and ceremonial of office, without troubling his brains with the details of administration.

Before we introduce Matilda to Mr. Landry, it may be agreeable to our reader to know something of him. The greater number of

persons in subaltern situations possess two distinct characters in the same person ; that which nature gives them, and that which, according to the notions of each one, is most suitable to his functions ; or what the French call "*l'air du rôle que l'on joue.*" The chief puts on an air of dignity and superiority, while those who are about him affect to be impenetrable. This sufficiently explains the difference between the same person in and out of authority. His genius, or if he possess no such quality, his capacity, is often in such complete contradiction with the position in which accident or favour may place him, that we see him sometimes so ludicrous as to excite mirth, or so mischievous as to inspire hatred and contempt. So apt are people in place to be always acting a part, that the simplicity which ever accompanies real merit, is rarely found in a public

office. Travellers have remarked that this theatrical propensity is more common in England than in other countries; but it is carried to greater lengths in the colonial governments, than in the metropolis of the empire. The blue coat, with a stiff standing collar, the buff vest with buttons, bearing the crown in relief, inexpressibles of the same stuff, are constantly worn to puzzle the vulgar, and make incapacity pass for distinction. To this add the knowing composed look, and sly leer, and you have the portraiture of the person so well described by our friend Hudibras.

“ Fools are known by *looking* wise,
As men know woodcocks by their eyes.”

Our Canadian secretary was an old actor, and had accustomed the muscles of his face to display all the forms and expressions from the

ferocity of an enraged cat, to the suavity of a sucking lamb, according to the rank of his audience, and the circumstances in which he was accidentally placed. Boiling with loyalty, and naturally timid, this starched and powdered veteran saw nothing in the conduct of his majesty's colonial subjects, but "treason, plots, and conspiracies" against the state; talked of nothing but the peril to which a faithful discharge of his duty exposed him, and like the maul statute of Sir Walter Scott, in the agonies of his fear might mistake a kitchen-wench, with a tinder-box in her hand, for a rebel with a cocked pistol levelled at his head.

This prim, crimped, and powdered person, was seated in his cabinet, paring his nails, and yawning after a hearty breakfast, when Matilda was announced. The name of D'Argenteuil set his nerves into increased action, and he

gathered some loose papers that lay on the table before him, in order to appear occupied, when the stranger should enter. He held the Canadians very cheap, and determined to disconcert the young lady the moment she ventured to plead for the liberty of her father. Matilda, though naturally fearless, had too much at stake not to tremble as she approached a person who had so much power over her father.

"I present myself before you, sir," said the interesting girl, "to solicit permission to visit my father, the Baron D'Argenteuil." The secretary rose from his easy chair, and without proposing to the young lady to take a seat, looked at her with an eye of investigation for some moments.

"You don't know what you ask, young lady," said the man in office. "You ask permission to visit a state prisoner; it is contrary

to usage ; you may write to him if you will. Your letter shall be laid before his excellency in council ; if it contain nothing objectionable, it will be transmitted to him."

" I do not ask to write to my father, but to be allowed to share his captivity, to nurse him, as he is in ill-health, and console him in his unmerited misfortunes."

" This is not possible, fair damsel," said the secretary, continuing to arrange his papers very unconcernedly ; " not possible, I assure you. The government allow a conspirator to be nursed—consoled !—a pretty story indeed ! At this rate we should have one half of the Canadian gentry in prison, and the other half taking care of them. It won't do—it won't do, young lady."

" My father, sir," said Matilda, colouring with indignation, " is no conspirator. Calumny

may have given him that reputation, and those who know him not through any other channel, may believe it ; but he is too honourable to conspire, and too powerful in his own district to seek a secret path to assail the government, were he so disposed."

" Thou art a bold solicitor, young woman."

" I am a daughter, sir, and if I exceed the limits of humble supplication, it is because I am accustomed to grant, not to ask favours. You have perhaps children, sir ; and if you could only change places with my poor father—"

" Me children ! fair maiden, you take me for a veteran of your father's standing. No such thing ; a bachelor, I assure you ; and if you want a husband, quite at your service."

" The daughter of the Baron d'Argenteuil had a right to expect a more serious answer,

Mister Secretary," said Matilda, glowing with anger.

"And I have given thee a very serious one, my pretty black eyes of a disloyal father."

"Yes, sir; and in a tone that your situation covers with impunity. Had you dared to hold such language to me in my father's domains, you would run a chance of being dipped in the Lake of the Two Mountains."

"The devil I would!" said the man of despatches and sealing-wax; "and it is thus I am to be interrupted in my official duties; thus insulted and menaced in the office of his majesty's secretary for his North American colony of Lower Canada! Madam—madam! I have been twenty years in the king's civil service, and no one has dared to hold such speech to me. But it is not the humble secretary you offend, young woman, it is a branch of the executive

power of the state,—a part and parcel of the supreme authority,—an emanation of regal dignity. Madam—I say, madam, you shall not visit your father, if he be your father. He is accused of treason, of plotting with the enemy. You may retire. I shall report your conduct to his excellency the governor-general."

Having thus asserted what Mr. Landry called his *official dignity*, he rang a bell, left his office to the care of a boy who answered the call, and retreated as if time pressed him to do as much mischief as possible.

Matilda had been so little accustomed to scenes like that she had just witnessed, and her pride was so deeply wounded by the insolence of this ignoble scribe, "dressed in a little brief authority, that had she been armed, as she sometimes was, she would probably have given him reason to remember her. She was even

tempted to call in Bellegarde, who stood waiting for her at the door, and who, at her bidding, would have pounced upon the governor himself with as much alacrity as he would strike his hunting-pike into a wild boar. But a moment of reflection convinced her that she was not among her faithful Indians and devoted tenants at the Lake of the Two Mountains, and she assumed a placid look on quitting the office, lest Bellegarde should discover that she had been ill-treated, and in the fury of devotedness, known only to the followers of a Scottish chieftain, or the adherents of an Indian warrior, commit some act of violence, that would not be easily repaired. Dejected and sorrowful, she joined Bellegarde, and proposed to him to conduct her towards the state prison, in which her beloved parent was confined. She walked round it, surveying its strong walls and lofty towers,

and looking anxiously towards the grated windows, in the hope of catching a glimpse, or speaking to some person who could give her tidings of him. She saw the sentry changed, and thought that the corporal, as he placed the soldier at his post, seemed to give some order that related to her, as he looked twice towards the spot where she stood, with Bellegarde by her side. When the guard was relieved, and the sentinel alone, she approached him, and inquired of what regiment he was.

“I belong to the Tenth, miss.”

“You know Captain De Courcy, then?”

“Do I know him? Is it me? By my soul it’s I that does! I ate and drank many a time in his father’s house. Sure I know the ould earl, since I was a bit of a gossoon—and long life to him!—I’m from his own place.”

Matilda finding she had not to do with a

surly piece of stuff, but a kind looking, loquacious fellow, determined to excite an interest in him, by speaking of his captain.

“ My good man, Captain De Courcy is my particular friend.”

“ Faith, and a better man never was born, miss ! a poor man’s friend, and as brave an officer as ever wore a belt round his waist. Sure you are not from Ireland, miss ?”

“ No ; but I love the kind-hearted Irish ; and only wish Captain De Courcy were here now, to assist me in finding my poor old father.”

“ Your father, miss ! and where is he, for the love of God ?”

“ In that prison, good soldier.”

“ O, by my soul ! if he is there, you’ll find him aisy enough ; for the poor devils are not allowed a long walk from their lodging.”

“ Yes ! but how am I to get in ? ”

“ Get in, did you say ? By all that’s handsome, you ought to think yourself well off to be out.”

“ But my father is sick, and I wish to get in, in order to nurse him.”

“ Then God bless you for that ! may be that ould thief of a Canadian that keeps the kays of the jail, would let you go in, by just giving him something to drink.”

“ Then you have no objection to allow me to try the experiment ? May I go and ring at the gate ? ”

“ The corporal towld me, sure enough, not to let never a man pass ; but he said nothing about a woman.”

“ And that young Indian, who waits upon me, may he not come with me ? ”

“ What ! the copper-coloured fellow yonder,

that looks more like a thief than a bishop? O, by St. Patrick, he must not come within arm's length of the sentry-box!"

"Many thanks, my good fellow, for your kindness, in permitting me to pass. Here is a guinea to remind you that an act of humanity merits a reward."

"God bless you, my lady! the sight of a yellow-boy is good for sore eyes; but a sentry on his post dare not take money—but," (recollecting the poverty of his wife and child,) he added, "if you would just drop it on the ground, I would take an opportunity to pick it up, and drink to your health in the bargain."

"It shall be as you wish," said Matilda, letting fall the guinea at the feet of the sentinel; and passing on towards the steps, leaving Pat to interpret in his own way the order he had received, not to permit any man to pass, or to

take money on his post. She ascended the stone stairs, leading to the prison door, and, with a trembling hand, rang the bell. A small, grated aperture in the door, closed within by a sliding plate of iron, enabled the keeper of the prison to examine the person who sought admittance. Through this hole she was interrogated as to her name and business. As the interlocutor addressed her in French, her hopes grew warmer.

"I am the daughter of the Baron D'Argenteuil, come to see my father, who is confined on account of some false denunciation of his enemies. I know he is in bad health. I shall die of grief if I be much longer deprived of seeing him."

"My duty compels me to answer you, young lady," said the man, in a softer tone than that of his first question, "that I know not the

names of the state prisoners who enter here. It is the intention of government that they be forgotten, until justice be done upon them."

"I should only lose moments that are precious, my good sir, were I to seek to convince an agent of the government, that my father is innocent, and that nothing can be more barbarous, than to deprive an old man, whose actions have ever been pure and benevolent, of the consolation of bidding, perhaps, a last farewell to an only child, who seeks to comfort and console him. We are rich," said she, sobbing convulsively; "and the man who had humanity enough to second my purpose, would be well rewarded by me here, and by heaven hereafter."

We leave our reader to decide whether the golden key, with which Matilda was prepared, opened the lock of the prison door, or her touching appeal softened the heart of the Cerberus

who had the charge of it ; but she was not long in prevailing upon the keeper to grant all she demanded. It is said, that an ass laden with gold can enter the strongest city. It would then be wonderful if the melting tones of a pious and lovely girl, accompanied by a large purse filled with pieces of gold, should be lost upon the keeper of a prison.

“ It would be dangerous,” said the man, “ to admit you at present ; but come to the corner of the square at nine this evening, and wait there until a person shall pass by you, pronouncing the word ‘ *Governor* ;’—take his arm, and fear no evil.”

“ Can I not be accompanied by a faithful follower, equally anxious to see his patron and friend ?”

“ I dare not extend the privilege beyond yourself,” answered the jailor. “ I am in the

habit of conducting my daughter from a boarding school, sometimes, at the hour I have named. You shall take her place ; and if I be perceived, no notice will be taken of it."

" You then have a daughter," said Matilda, weeping : " I confide my case and my person to those feelings which nature has taught you to appreciate."

The sliding plate suddenly closed the opening, and Matilda retreated with hurried steps.

" The blessin' of God go wid ye," said the sentinel, as she passed.

She smiled, through her tears, a look of gratitude on the poor Irishman, and joined Bellegarde, who stood at the corner of the square, with hand upon his dagger, watching every movement of his young mistress.

CHAPTER VII.

— Come let's away to prison :
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage :
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness :—so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news.

KING LEAR.

MATILDA returned towards the inn, and counted the minutes, as they passed slowly away, with an impatience, that our first lessons of adversity never fail to excite. It had never entered into her imagination, that the only child of a wealthy lord, living on her own estate, surrounded with

obedient and devoted servants and kind parents far removed from the ordinary chances of misfortune, could in a few days be reduced to the condition in which she was placed, by the turpitude of an ungrateful hypocrite, with whose agency in the calamity that had befallen her she was still ignorant. She knew all her father's conduct from day to day; and although he was not a partisan, neither was he an enemy of those who had conquered his country. He obeyed the laws, mixed little with society, had the prejudices and aversions common to every people, who pass, without being consulted, from one government to another: but these were not crimes in the eyes of Matilda; nor could she comprehend the policy of such an act of injustice, on the part of those, whose interest and duty ought to suggest conciliation, instead of outrage, in the mode of administering the

laws. She was possessed of a large fund of untouched energy, fitted for the occasion ; and at the appointed hour repaired to the rendezvous. She was ignorant of the danger to which she might be exposed ; and by way of precaution, concealed in her dress a small poignard, that Bellegarde wore in his sash. She did not wait long for the person who was to conduct her to her father. As he approached, he pronounced the word of recognition. She took the arm of the jailor, and her conductor passed the sentry, by giving the parole and countersign, without stopping to be examined further.

Matilda felt none of those alarms which some young persons are taught to consider necessary to render them interesting. She only regretted that her faithful Bellegarde was not permitted to be of the party.

The great iron door opened slowly, and she

found herself in a narrow corridor, that surrounded the interior building, barred at every twenty paces by a grated door, which opened and closed upon her as she proceeded. The faint light of a few small lamps was barely sufficient to show the strength of this gloomy abode of sorrow and suffering, which only wanted the inscription that Dante placed on the gates of hell, to make her suppose herself in the vicinity of the infernal regions: but hope entered with her, and filial tenderness gave firmness to her steps.

“This,” said she to herself, as she contemplated the ‘dungeons of despair,’—“this is the dwelling which a jealous and terrible authority, far from the fountain of British justice and clemency, has allotted to an old man, sinking into the grave, incapable of committing a crime; punished, by anticipation, upon a false charge,

and refused the consolation which the vilest culprit in England enjoys."

In the midst of these painful reflections, the jailor stopped at a narrow door, just large enough to allow a single person to pass sideways into a small square court, on the verge of which the family of the keeper resided. They entered into a commodious apartment, where the wife of the conductor waited to receive Matilda, with a respectful cordiality that she was far from expecting. She offered Matilda a chair, while her husband went up a narrow stairs, to prepare the baron for the welcome visit of his beloved daughter.

"This is a melancholy affair, mademoiselle," said the woman; "and should your visit reach the ears of the governor, we should all be shut up together, or at best be turned into the street."

"Be tranquil, good woman," said Matilda; "my word is passed, and the evil genius that presides over the destiny of our unhappy colony is not powerful enough to force the secret from me. Moreover, whatever be the issue, I promise you ample indemnity. You probably have heard of the condition of my family, and may believe that we possess the means, as well as the inclination, to prove our gratitude."

"We know very well with whom we have to do, mademoiselle. I am a native of the parish of St. Ann; and although I removed when very young to Quebec with my family, I remember well the good and generous Baron D'Argenteuil. All our people loved and respected him; and now that misfortune has overtaken him, my early impressions in his favour are all awakened. My husband had no notion, when the baron was delivered over to his care, that it could be

the same person who owned the seigneurie of St. Ann, and rendered service to many of my relations; so, mademoiselle, we agreed to ask him all about it, and finding we had not been mistaken in our conjecture, we removed him from the rooms allotted for state prisoners to our own chamber, where he is as comfortable as in his own house."

"God bless you, good woman," said Matilda, embracing her; "you are not of the family of the secretary of his excellency, whom I solicited this morning, in the hope of having free ingress to my father during his confinement."

"What, old Landry, mademoiselle? no, praise be to our blessed Lady; although my poor man be a jailor, his heart is not so hard as that old red snake, who would sting to death every Canadian between the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Great Rapids, if he had the

power. *Sacristy!* if he only suspected that we were from the parish of St. Ann, and that we allowed you to visit the baron, there would not be handcuffs enough in the round-room to load us with."

"He is, I believe, a very harsh man," said Matilda, recollecting the reception he had given her in the morning.

"Harsh, *misericorde!* he makes every one tremble, especially when he smiles. I have heard many state prisoners say, that even the governor is afraid of him; who, by-the-by, is only governor for the form; since the secretary does in all things just what he pleases."

The jailor now entered to conduct Matilda to the apartment of the baron. She summoned all her energy to aid her to give courage to her father, and mingle that firmness with resignation, which is the only kind of courage that

enables us to support adversity with dignity ; but when she saw the change that had already marked his countenance, and the debility and agitation apparent in his whole person, she fell into his arms and wept aloud. The old man showed more composure.

“ I am not unfortunate,” said he, “ since Providence has found means of eluding the vigilance of my persecutors, and conducting you to my presence. It is of little importance whether the short time I have to spend on earth be passed in a prison or a palace. My past life has been one scene of prosperity, and it is for wise purposes that I receive a lesson of adversity, to prepare me for another and a better. All I could wish is now accomplished, since I can see and take leave of my beloved child. It is to all appearance a bitter calamity for the last of the Argenteuils to die in prison, in a

country that had been governed by his ancestors; but my conduct on this trying occasion ought to prove that I have not been wholly unworthy of the privileges I have hitherto enjoyed."

This manly speech, delivered with the dignity becoming her father's character, dried up the tears of Matilda; and she questioned him with composure on the cause of the measure of rigour the government had adopted.

"I am ignorant, my child, of the charges that are laid to my account; but I am treated as if they were of a very serious nature. My age, my fortune, and a life exempt from ambition, ought to have made the government hesitate; more especially as I have lived secluded from society for several years; but I am probably the victim of some false denunciation, which time will clear up; and I only desire to

live long enough to leave my reputation free from this stain, which mistaken zeal or a cruel policy has sought to fix upon it. I wish you, my love, to employ some able advocate to investigate the affair; and if justice cannot be obtained from the colonial government, to address a memorial to the king, to bring me to a speedy trial. If it were necessary, my nephew might hasten to England for that purpose."

" My dear father," said Matilda, " our friend, Father Leclerc, will soon be here, and if you approve of it, will aid me with his counsel and influence: you are convinced of his wisdom and devotedness, and these will prevent us from taking any false steps, into which I might be hurried by zeal and tenderness, unaccompanied by experience." To prove how much she stood in need of a guide, she related her interview with the colonial

secretary, and expressed her fears that she had done more harm than good by her haughty bearing towards that vindictive person. But the baron, far from disapproving, applauded her conduct.

“Thou hast the blood of thy ancestors in thy veins, my noble daughter. Hadst thou quailed under the insolence of this base subaltern, I could not have forgiven thee. To show ourselves superior to persecution is a victory obtained over our oppressors. I approve and thank thee, my love,” said the old man, embracing his daughter. “But thou must not be exposed to such scenes; consult Leclerc, and be governed by him.”

“But he will not be here for some days, my dear father; in the mean time you suffer in health, and stand in need of medical aid. I cannot believe the governor would refuse you a physician.”

" I cannot tell what the government would refuse, since I am ignorant of what it accuses me."

" You can only be suspected of disaffection, dear father. You have avoided every thing that could excite the jealousy of the power that governs Canada; is it possible that you are not master of your private opinions? or that you should be deprived of your liberty at an age when a prison puts your life in peril, merely because you have taken no part in the troubles that now agitate the colony. Have you no suspicion of the hand that has inflicted this calamity upon you?"

" I cannot suspect, my love, where there is no cause in my recollection. I am known to be unfriendly to the domination of strangers in my native land; but even my opinions have not been uttered out of my own family; our chap-

lain and my nephew only have been witnesses to the observations that have escaped me ; but if I have expressed a transient regret that the land of my fathers is administered by those who are ignorant, not only of our customs, but even our language, that cannot be construed into a crime, even were my expressions uttered in the presence of the governor. But on this head I am at ease ; neither Leclerc nor Bertinval could desire to do me an injury."

" You have often taught me, dear sir, to believe that from a bad man we ought to look for all possible bad ; and if I were not aware of your paternal partiality for my cousin, I would admonish you not to have any confidence in his integrity."

" How can you, Matilda, carry your prejudice so far as to believe, that I have an enemy in my nephew ? There is more passion than

justice in such a suspicion ; banish it from your mind."

" I could never have harboured such a thought, sir, had not Father Leclerc told me that he was a bad man ; and as he could only give me a few moments as I passed through Montreal, he confined his observations to that assertion, assuring me that if an occasion made it necessary, he had proofs of his wickedness in his possession."

" Merciful heaven !" said the baron, " what new and unexpected disaster is reserved for me ? But no ; it is prejudice, exaggeration. He has been guilty of irregularity common enough to young men of fortune and family ; but he is incapable of injuring his adopted father—his benefactor. It cannot be ; I would not believe Leclerc, much as I value his honesty, and have confidence in his veracity.

Man is not such an ideot as to destroy the hen that lays golden eggs for him."

" I have only repeated the words my confessor spoke; but the subject gives you pain, dearest father, and only serves to diminish your power of supporting the troubles you are called upon to combat. Let us think of your health. To-morrow I shall make a direct application to the governor to allow you to receive the visits of a physician, if he will not permit you to see your family."

" I will ask nothing as a favour, my child," said the baron with energy. " Consult a lawyer, and if I may demand these matters as a right, be it so; but Argenteuil will not stoop to solicit, even to save his life. If I fall the victim of arbitrary cruelty, my death will excite the sympathy of my supine countrymen, and perhaps return the bitter draught to the

lips of my oppressors. Good night, my daughter! to remain longer might bring trouble on the heads of the poor family whose attentions to me would be a crime in the eyes of their masters. Go to thy lodging, and be persuaded that I am not unhappy: all suffering is supportable where there is no remorse to disturb the health of the conscience."

Matilda retired to the apartment of the good woman, whose sympathy had given her the happy privilege of seeing her father; and conscious of the risk to which the humanity of the jailor exposed his family, she resolved to quiet his fears before she departed.

"I am too grateful for your kindness not to reward it on my own account," said Matilda; "and too sensible of the inconvenience to which you expose yourselves, to leave you uneasy about your independence, in case your ge-

nerous conduct deprive you of your place. I pledge you the honour of my house, to make ample provision for you and your family on our estates; and this obligation I will give you to-morrow in writing, sanctioned by my father."

The man and his wife expressed their gratitude and readiness to give every facility in their power to the interviews of Matilda with her father; but in order to render their services efficacious, recommended the utmost circumspection. These points being settled to the satisfaction of the parties, Matilda returned with her guide to the spot where Bellegarde waited, almost frozen to death, for his mistress. They arrived unobserved at the inn; and although Matilda felt alarmed at the declining health of her father, her mind was reposed by the interview she had with him, and the hope of soon

putting an end to his captivity, with the aid of Father Leclerc, whose arrival she looked for with impatience.

In so small a town as Quebec, it is not easy to conceal from the public many days, the arrival of a stranger of such distinction as the daughter of Argenteuil; and as the motive of her visit was soon known, all the persons, who by their position, were independent of the government, hastened to pay her those attentions that were due to her merit and condition. She could have wished to remain incognito; but as Bellegarde rambled about the town, he met with many of the officers who had been witnesses of his valour and capacity, at the battle of Burlington Bay. He was invited to dine at the mess, and treated with that cordiality and distinction, which brave men are ever ready to show to those who have been engaged in a common

danger with them. He was the object of general admiration and esteem, and so great was the public curiosity to get a sight of the young Indian hero, that crowds of people were gathered together every day in front of his lodging for that purpose. When he walked about the town, the Canadians saluted him, and the invitations he received to the houses of the gentry were so numerous, that both reason and prudence admonished him to keep within doors, and refuse every pleasure, but that of waiting upon and consoling Matilda.

This species of notoriety increased the danger of accompanying Matilda to her daily rendezvous with the jailor, and they both judged it prudent, that during her visits to her father, Bellegarde should remain at the inn. The arrival of Father Leclerc was a source of tranquillity and satisfaction to them both. This

pious friend lost not a moment after the expiration of his month of seclusion at the seminary, in joining his friends at Quebec. They took counsel of an able barrister, who judged it expedient to proceed by petition to the governor in council, in order to exhaust conciliatory measures, before having recourse to an appeal to a tribunal in the dependence of the government, at a moment when it was judged expedient to dispense with the ordinary forms of law.

This could not be done in the name of the baron, as all regular access to him was prohibited. A petition was forthwith drawn up, and presented in the name of his daughter, asserting the innocence of her father, the hardship of depriving him of his liberty without proof of his guilt, and demanding, in the name of justice and humanity, a prompt judicial investigation. The sapient Sir Crowdie Mac-

grosgutt was more irritated by the lofty tone than convinced by the solid reasons of the petition ; and seeing nothing but a new conspiracy in this act of filial affection, assembled his council to submit to the expediency of confining Matilda in a convent, and putting Bellegarde and the priest, who were held culpable as her abettors, into prison.

This grave question was debated. It was urged that his excellency might excite the enmity of the clergy by attacking Father Leclerc, expose his dignity to animadversion by employing harsh measures towards so young a female ; but all agreed in the necessity of keeping a close watch on Bellegarde, who was popular with the troops, and possessed great influence with the Indian tribes, upon whose aid the government relied for assistance in the war then raging between England and her North American

colonies. In consequence of these objections to the plan proposed by the governor, at the instigation of Secretary Landry, it was decided, that a solemn investigation should be held in presence of the council, and that spies should be placed over Bellegarde.

The health of the baron was declining so rapidly, that Matilda became every hour more alarmed, and finally prevailed upon the guardian of the prison to make such a report, that medical aid was permitted to be furnished by the governor's family doctor, in whose orthodox opinions, both in politics and physic, his excellency could safely place confidence. This learned leech, who had in his pocket a patent, assuring him the reversion of the lucrative place of collector of the port of Quebec, was devoted to his patron, and resolved to find the baron in such a state of health as might suit the views

of those who employed him ; but on the first examination he found the patient in so bad a state, as to compel him to declare he had not many days to live.

What was now become an act of necessity was declared to be a proof of Sir Crowdie's clemency ; and Matilda received notice, that in consequence of her petition, she was at liberty to remove her father to a private lodging, until his health permitted him to take his trial. She accordingly presented herself, escorted by Bellegarde, the priest, and the servants of the inn, to the state prison, and removed her father to a commodious chamber, where she could entirely devote herself to him.

When Bellegarde saw the pale, emaciated face that had so often looked upon him with affection and benevolence, his heart was filled with grief and indignation. He wept bitterly ;

and in the agony of despair, rather unguardedly vowed that if his death should ensue, the blood of his persecutors should be spilled to avenge his loss. The sight of his friends, and the various emotions their tenderness and care produced, gave a momentary excitement to the old lord; but it increased the fever that had already nearly exhausted him, and the following morning his approaching dissolution was announced by the physicians who were called to a consultation in the presence of Father Leclerc. The first care of the good priest was to administer to his dying friend the last sacraments according to the ritual of the Catholic church, and prepare him to take a solemn farewell of his daughter. Finding him sinking fast, he summoned Matilda and Bellegarde to his presence. The baron affectionately embraced his daughter, recommended to her protection and kindness all

those who had served him, or were dependent upon his bounty ; and finding himself incapable of entering into more minute details of his last wishes, ended by saying,—“ You are now about to be left without either a legal or natural protector. On this subject I have nothing new to urge ; you know my wishes.”

“ My dearest friend,” said the priest, interrupting him, “ Bertinval is a villain. I possess full evidence of what I allege before heaven and you. Release your daughter from all obligation to ——.” Here a deep sigh spared the baron the pain of hearing the solemn admonition of the priest. His spirit had fled !

“ On your knees, my children,” said Father Leclerc, “ and let your prayers, rather than useless lamentations, accompany the departed soul to the throne of grace and mercy.”

The voice of the poor clergyman was nearly

drowned in his tears. Matilda and Bellegarde kneeled by the bed-side; “grief had drunk the offering their hearts had made ere it could reach the eye.” Their affliction was too profound to leave them the power of utterance. Matilda sunk under its weight; and the priest, with the aid of Bellegarde, carried her into another room, where bleeding and restoratives awoke her to mourn the loss of that friend, which of all those that nature or human ties give us, can never be replaced.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ceci prouve deux points : d'abord, qu'il est utile
Dans la douce amitié de placer son bonheur ;
Puis, avec de l'esprit il est souvent facile,
Au piege qu'il nous tend, de surprendre un trompeur.

Fables de Florian.

THE Baron D'Argenteuil was interred by the side of Montcalm, under whose orders he had fought, and received a wound in his shoulder, at the memorable affair which rendered the British masters of lower Canada. Those honours which were due to his memory and personal merits, were paid by all who were not in the immediate dependance of the gover-

nor. When Bellegarde saw his friend deposited in the tomb, and bade adieu for ever to those venerable remains of a man, whose kindness had been unremitting from his earliest years, he returned to the inn, mournful and unhappy.

The priest had removed Matilda to the convent, where the sisters of the holy sacrament received her, with all that tenderness with which religion consoles misfortune. The young chief alone for the moment, without any companion to speak comfort to him, delivered himself over to a train of gloomy and disheartening reflections on his own situation. He had lost his principal prop and support in the death of D'Argenteuil ; he knew that Matilda, now free to follow her own inclinations, would become the wife of De Courcy, and that under the title of a humble friend, he would in reality be little removed from the condition of a dependant

upon the bounty of those who succeeded to the estates upon which he had been brought up. The prospect of a position so subaltern was revolting;—he could neither submit to it, nor resolve to quit the service of a being, whom he had been so long accustomed to love and respect, but whom he could never aspire to approach by any higher title than that of a valued and beloved retainer.

“ And this,” said he, “ is a destiny which every hour will render more insupportable; a destiny, so unsuited to that spirit the God of my fathers and my nation has breathed into me!—To be the well-fed lacquey, and servilely eat the bread of a new master, when the remnant of the Ontario tribe would hail me for its chief, and under my auspices recover its former dignity! No, by heaven, this lot can never be that of Bellegarde!—I will sacrifice

a puerile attachment to a higher duty and more noble object. I will wait awhile, and discharge, if I may be yet useful, my last debt to the house of Argenteuil; then join my degraded and unhappy people; and with the advantages which a better education has endowed me, call them to life and independance. Why should the colour of my skin be a diploma of slavery, and give to every pale, cold-blooded mortal, who calls himself the child of civilization, a title to hold himself my superior in my native forests, where I may walk abroad in the dignity of my nature, and receive that homage and fealty that I must here pay to others, merely that I may eat my dole in sorrow and abasement, and sleep on a soft bed, until effeminate and degraded, I lose my energy, and sink into the condition of a caitiff slave, unworthy of my own respect, and deprived of that of my

red brethren. No, it shall not be; my soul swells beyond the measure of those chains with which custom has surrounded, hampered, and galled its growth and action;—it is time to emancipate it. The hour that separates me from my angelic mistress approaches; it will be painful, but the struggle will give me new force. The arrows that are planted in my bosom are barbed, and the wounds will long continue to bleed; but Bellegarde alone can tear them from his heart!"

Wearied with these harassing thoughts, and well satisfied with the resolution he had formed, this noble spirit sought repose, and casting himself on his couch, dreamed of war and glory—saw lovely visions of distant hills, covered with flowers, sunny valleys filled with deer and buffaloes, which he hunted with the ardour of the Indian, and the skill of the white man;

and then returned to his village, surrounded by willing and devoted friends and relations of his family. The Indians are superstitious, and Bellegarde only saw in the visions of fancy the approbation of Providence of the resolution he had formed.

He did not choose to make known his intentions to Matilda ; he had courage to do any thing but displease or afflict her ; and he was aware that the moment was not yet come when he could separate himself eternally from her. Father Leclerc called to see him the next day, and invited him to dine with the clergy, at the house of the superior at Quebec, where he was treated with kindness and attentions that flattered and pleased him. The good fathers questioned him about the battle in which he played so distinguished a part, and were filled with admiration of his modesty

in giving all the merit to De Courcy, and abstaining from a fault common to the Indians, that of boasting of his own prowess.

Every day Father Leclerc gave him news of Matilda, and he learned with infinite delight, that the pious exercises in which she was engaged, and the consoling sympathy of the nuns, imparted to her such a spirit of resignation, that her health was not likely to suffer from the violent paroxysms of grief into which she was plunged by the melancholy event that had befallen her.

He now perceived for the first time, that wherever he went he was followed by two persons, who, alternately watching all his movements and listening when he held a casual conversation with any one, seemed to have some other motive than idle curiosity. He complained to the priest of this species of espionage, which he could not well account for, and his

language excited in his worthy preceptor so much alarm, as to suggest the necessity of requiring his promise that he would not resent the importunity that so much annoyed him. The truth was, that Bellegarde's known attachment to the man who had fallen a victim to unjust persecution excited the suspicion and vigilance of the colonial secretary, who surrounded the young Indian with spies, and sought by every means in his power to become acquainted with his opinions and disposition. Nothing in the conduct of Bellegarde could authorise that officious guardian of the public weal to complain of, or find fault with him ; and yet his presence at the seat of government displeased him. As a great proof of his sagacity, he suggested to Sir Crowdie Macgrosgutt the expediency of gaining him over by some show of attention, that might flatter the self-

love of the savage chief; and after a serious debate, at which his excellency's "*confidential advisers*" assisted, it was resolved to signify the governor's pleasure to receive him at one of those meetings, which he dignified with the name of *levée*. Landry undertook to make known the high honour conferred upon the young Indian, and under cover of a favour, resolved to sound him, and if possible, remove him from the service of Matilda. While this mighty intrigue was fermenting in the head of the secretary, the priest informed Bellegarde, that Matilda was now sufficiently recovered to return to the house of her father, and resume her ordinary mode of life, under the protection of her aunt, who urged her to lose no time in leaving a place where she had been so sorely afflicted.

Bellegarde and the priest were inseparable;

and as their daily conversation turned upon the family arrangements that would be made at the Lake of the Two Mountains, as soon as they returned with Matilda, Bellegarde perceived the embarrassing situation in which his beloved mistress would be placed by the authority given to Bertinval in the will of the baron.

When Matilda returned to the inn, in order to make preparations for her departure, the rights of the co-heirs to the estates were examined, and the mode of dividing them as directed by the testator, was a subject that perplexed and puzzled them all. The last words of her father had made a profound impression on the mind of Matilda; and although she could not resolve to sacrifice herself to her father's mistaken partiality in favour of her cousin, her spirits were dreadfully depressed at the apprehension of passing her life in a manner

so little conformable with the dying wishes of a parent she so much revered.

“Your sentiments do you honour, my daughter,” said the priest; “but had your father known at the moment he urged you to become the wife of your unworthy cousin, that this wicked and perverse man was the husband of another, far from persisting in his project, he would have cast off and disowned him for ever.”

“The husband of another, holy father! O what a load you have taken from my heart! Is it possible that he is so depraved—so execrable a monster? This is beyond the bounds of credibility!”

“It is nevertheless true, my daughter; and although death has sealed those lips that could have charged him with the profligate intention of becoming your husband during her life,

I have the dying declaration of the unhappy woman, to convince you of the truth of what I assert."

"Then by the spirit of my fathers!" said Bellegarde, "he dies the death of a vile traitor; and this hand shall send him to fill a vacant place in hell!"

Matilda at that moment was so fired with indignation, that a smile of approbation flitted over her pale countenance.

"Heaven forbid, young man!" said the priest, "that thy hand be stained with the blood of a sinner! Providence has not deputed thee, Bellegarde, to anticipate its just vengeance, which sooner or later must visit the guilty."

The Indian was silent but resolved; and Matilda recovered from the first emotion that the declaration of the priest produced, joined

the pious man in dissuading Bellegarde from committing any act of violence towards Bertinval. But every thing this high-tempered and susceptible Indian had seen among the white men, only tended to increase his natural irascibility ; and although he made no answer, his sullenness proved that his mind was hatching mischief. He remained absorbed in gloomy reflections, while Father Leclerc continued to narrate the history of the unfortunate wife of Bertinval. He came to the letter he had written to him at the Lake of the Two Mountains ; and by comparing the time it must have reached him, and destroyed all his hopes of imposing much longer on the credulity of the baron, with the epoch of the baron's arrest by the officers of the colonial government, his penetration led him to suspect some participation on the part of the nephew in that afflicting event.

Matilda and Bellegarde listened for the first time to a tale of perfidy in real life, and considered such as she had read in romances as mere fictitious works of imagination; but the toils that had been spread for her, and above all, the belief that her honoured and credulous father had been entangled in them, and had escaped only by death, made her forget the moderate counsel she had just given to her faithful partizan. She burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Is this then the villain to whom I was to be linked for life? who dared to violate the sanctity of the house of Argenteuil, and fix a stain upon its unsullied reputation; and now, having accomplished the half of his project in the destruction of my father, only waits until he can heap new evils on the head of the daughter; and does this monster hope to inherit the castle of my ancestors as a reward for

his crimes? Be it so; I shall retire into a convent, and leave him to the remorse that pursues guilt to the tomb,—to the vengeance of heaven, and the reprobation of mankind."

"And to the arm of Bellegarde," said the Indian, "if one drop of the Ontario blood circulates in its veins."

"I have already told you, my son," said the priest, "that this language is not that of a Christian, but of a savage. You have tasted the sweets of civilization, and have been taught to forgive injuries; the laws alone can in this world reach offenders; your duty is to submit to them, if you would not in your turn fall a victim to them."

The teeth of Bellegarde beat against one another with the convulsive movements of the passion that agitated him; his eyes flamed like those of an enraged tiger; after a long

pause he sighed profoundly, and approaching the priest and Matilda, while large tears glistened in his eye, he addressed them both in the serious and solemn manner of his countrymen.

“ I have lived too long among white men, too long in the service of my murdered master and benefactor, for my own happiness, since I have witnessed the intrigues to which, in all probability, he has fallen a sacrifice. I have studied your laws—they afford impunity to Bertinval: your religion—it imposes on me obligations beyond the power of Indian virtue to observe; its precepts are divine, but who observes them? The combinations of reason and invention, which you call civilization, are made for colder clay than that of which I am formed. You say my language is that of a savage. Be it so; I will not disown it. When have you heard of an Indian betraying any one of his

kinsmen?—caressing him with one arm, while the other plunges the knife into his breast? Do we steal from one another? Do we destroy those whom we call our friends? Do we return evil for good? Do we refuse to divide our meal with the hungry, or give shelter to a brother who enters our wigwam with the greeting of peace? Have we fetters and prisons for the innocent, like my lost friend, and a palace to lodge his guilty nephew? Do you see any of our chiefs feeding a hundred dogs, and as many horses for his amusement, and looking with an unpitying eye on thousands perishing around him for the want of that food which he possesses in such abundance, that even his waste and prodigality cannot consume it all? The game that is killed in our forests, the fish that are caught in our lakes, are they not eaten by those who hunt them? and given to those of

our tribe who are too old and feeble to provide for themselves—to chase the buffalo, or to spear the beaver? Do we caress our brethren when they are covered with new blankets, and turn our backs on them when they are worn out and shabby? Are we envious of the personal superiority of a red brother? or do we seek to lessen him in the opinion of the tribe by calumny? No; where then is this fancied superiority of the white men, which leads them to despise the sons of the forest? As to Belle-garde, he has eaten the bread of Argenteuil, and drank of his cup. His enemies are mine; we cannot breathe the same air; and as Bertinval has stung him to death, and deprived his daughter of happiness, his days are numbered. I owe this last service to the man who protected me, and to the tranquillity of his daughter, whom I love too much to leave in

the power of her father's assassin." So saying, Bellegarde walked out of the room, leaving Matilda and the priest mute with surprise, not unmixed with apprehension, that in spite of their remonstrances, he might execute his purpose.

While they were deliberating on the means of saving the life of Bertinval, Bellegarde went into the streets to purchase snow-shoes and skates, and such other articles as he might want on his way to the Lake of the Two Mountains. He perceived that the person who was in the habit of following him in all his walks, and who seemed to have no other employment, was very attentive when he entered the shops to purchase what he wanted; but as this was the last day he intended to pass at Quebec, he gave himself no uneasiness at an opportunity that could not last much longer. He returned to the inn, and

went early to bed, determined to set forth in the morning as soon as the gates of the city were opened. As all his motions were carefully watched, and reported daily to the jealous secretary, the purchase of skates and snow-shoes were not omitted. This excited the suspicion of the government, that some secret expedition was intended ; and as Bellegarde had not availed himself of the honour of being presented to the governor, notwithstanding the intimations of the secretary, he was set down as a disaffected subject, whose departure from the city might be dangerous. Orders were accordingly given to the two spies to arrest him if he attempted to depart alone. Bellegarde left the inn at an earlier hour than was supposed by his guardians, and had passed the gates on his way towards the river, when he was perceived by them. He walked slowly and mournfully ; but having a

small parcel in his hand, it was evident that something more than a morning walk had led him abroad. He had scarcely reached the bank of the St. Lawrence, when he was overtaken and questioned as to his purpose. He replied, without embarrassment, that he was on his way to the Black River to join his tribe.

"You have no passport," said the alguazils, "and must return to obtain one."

"I am not accustomed to ask permission to tread my native ground when and where I please," replied the Indian.

"In that case we have orders to arrest you," said one of them, laying his hand upon his arm.

Bellegarde bounded forward, and his tomahawk was instantly raised over his head. The men rushed upon him, and were instantly struck down within view of one of the sentinels, who gave the alarm to the nearest guard. Bellegarde

saw the soldiers running on the parapet; and aware that he would soon be surrounded if he could not speedily escape, fastened on his skates, and launching forward on the ice, was out of reach before the guard could march to the place where the wounded men lay. The time necessary to report the affair to the governor, and take measures for seizing the fugitive, enabled Bellegarde to separate himself by several miles from the garrison. A deep fall of snow had rendered the road on the bank of the river impassable, at least with such speed as might enable the post-horses, that are placed along the line, to go out of a slow walk, until the path had been beaten hard. The ice on the river was beginning to melt, and could only support persons on foot; so that Bellegarde, having many miles the start of those who might be sent after him, and being, moreover, strong,

active, and resolute, it was deemed impossible to overtake him on his way to the Algonquin village; and the project of pursuing him was abandoned. The wounded men were conveyed to the military hospital, where it was discovered, that he had only struck them with the flat part of his tomahawk, and consequently could not have intended to kill them, which he might as easily have done had he been so disposed.

The young Indian continued his course day and night, with short intervals of repose, and reached the village at that hour when he could enter the hut of his adopted father unperceived by the neighbours. A family council was immediately held, at which it was determined, not only that his arrival should be kept a profound secret, but that confidential scouts should be sent abroad to give notice of any appearance of military force, that might be on its way from Montreal towards

the Indian village. He was soon informed of all that had happened at the castle since his departure. The death of the baron had deeply afflicted the red and white population. Even Bertinval appeared in deep mourning, and had caused a solemn religious ceremony to be performed, in honour of the deceased lord, at the chapel of St. Ann ; not forgetting, at the same time, to declare himself chief of the seigniory, and joint heir with Matilda.

Time pressed Bellegarde ; and although nothing was more easy than to destroy the reptile, who had taken the place of the ancient master of the castle, at any moment of the day, Bellegarde felt a secret reluctance to stain with blood the walls that had been the asylum of his youth. He therefore resolved to watch his steps the moment he might go abroad. We give the narrative in his own words, communicated to

one of the fur traders many years after the event.

"I was silly enough, for a long time, to love the daughter of my protector.* I was too

* Education only could develope in the heart of Bellegarde a passion unknown to the Indians; and he was probably the first of his race who felt the pains or jealousy of rivalship.

"Neither in their speeches or songs," says an accurate writer in the "*Archœologia Americana*," "has there been found a single poetical or musical sentiment founded on the tender passion between the sexes." War and friendship are the only soul-stirring subjects that animate them.

From the work above cited we give a specimen of their poetry, sung at Washington, in 1806, by the Osago chief, in presence of the Indian interpreters:—

Say, warriors, why, when arms are sung,
And dwell on every native tongue,
Do thoughts of death intrude?
Why weep the common lot of all?
Why think that you yourselves may fall,
Pursuing or pursued?

young to discern the distance between an Indian boy and the daughter of a proud baron; and my passion only unveiled itself to my own reason, in the extreme pleasure I felt, whenever I could accompany her to the chase, or render her any little service. I was, by slow degrees, awakened to a sense of the inferiority of my condition; and determined, at an early period, to prove my personal title to the esteem of

Doubt not your chosen chieftain's care,
To lead you forth, and show you where
The enemy's conceal'd;
His single arm shall make th' attack,
And drive the sly invaders back,
Or stretch them on the field.

Proceeding with embodied force,
No nations can withstand our course,
Or check our bold career;
Tho' if they knew my warlike fame,
The terrors of my form and name,
They'd quake or die with fear.

those, who might look down with contempt upon the obscurity of my birth. I sought danger in every shape in which it appeared, whether on land or water, in the perils of war or the chase; desirous only of escaping, in a glorious death, from the humiliation of a position, which I supported with less resignation than became the son of the celebrated man-killer, the shield of his tribe, the terror of his foes. The satisfaction I felt, whenever I had an opportunity to obey her orders, or to please her, rendered my subaltern condition agreeable; but I suffered the pangs of jealousy whenever her eye fell with softness on any being but myself. Had I not been withheld by the fear of offending her, I would have willingly killed every stranger who seemed to please her, and especially Captain De Courcy, in the early stage of our acquaintance. In short, my whole

being was inviolably dedicated to her service. When I learned, from the discoveries made by Father Leclerc, the extent of the evil her cousin had brought on her house, the right he had acquired of claiming her hand, or appropriating to his own use the half of her fortune ; but, above all, the moment I saw that he had been instrumental in bringing the worthy baron into the unhappy situation that hastened the termination of his life, a ray of light fell on my soul. I saw that one blow would avenge his death, relieve his daughter from the presence of her enemy, and discharge my gratitude of the load that years had accumulated upon it. She loved De Courcy ; the only obstacle to their union was removed ; the death of Bertinval would assure her happiness, and leave her fortune and person free from incumbrance ; and as this last service could

only be performed by her faithful Bellegarde, the execution of it was speedily resolved. I left her under the care of her confessor, and took such measures as enabled me to reach the dwelling of our people before it was possible for any person to thwart my purpose. I arrived weary at the wigwam of my adopted father; but my spirit gained new fire at the sight of the walls that contained the game I sought to strike. My coming was a secret to all except the family of my old Indian chief; and I knew that no member of it would betray me. Two of my young friends watched the motions of Bertinval, and gave me notice where I should find him. He was armed for the chase, at the spot they had indicated. I pounced upon him and disarmed him. When he perceived the enemy with whom he had to contend, the consciousness of his guilt, and the

reward that seemed to await it, deprived him of speech. My first intention was to discharge one of the pistols I carried in my belt at his head ; but it occurred to me, that although I had a just motive to destroy his body, I ought to give him a moment to repent of his sins. I hesitated an instant, and holding my poignard over him, told him to recommend his soul to the mercy of the GREAT SPIRIT, and repent of his crimes. He was on his knees, and implored me to spare him, offering me half the fortune the baron had left him. He shook with terror. I urged him to make good use of the few moments he had left, and prepare to rejoin the wife he had cruelly abandoned, and give an account to Heaven of his perfidy to his uncle. He saw there was no hope of escape and screamed for help. A blow of my weapon made a shorter passage for his breath, and paid

the last debt I owed to the house of Argenteuil. I returned to the wigwam, and told my brethren what I had done. As I had no time to lose, I engaged two of the young men to accompany me to the borders of Lake Ontario, to marry into my family, and seal an eternal peace between these two nations, that had constantly been at war. My story was soon told to the assembled chiefs of my nation. I was received with joy, restored to all the rights and privileges due to my birth, and to that freedom for which my spirit had so long thirsted. Since when, my principal care has been to preserve peace among the red men, to unite them against the daily invasions of the strangers who are spreading themselves over our land, to engage the improvident to cultivate the soil rather than trust to the precarious provision of the chase, and without adopting the vices of a

civilized people, imitate their industry and love of order."

Such was the short and brilliant career of this young Indian, whose direct agency on so many important occasions makes him the true hero of our tale.

CHAPTER XI.

For it was not the blind capricious rage
A word can kindle and a word assuage?
But the deep working of a soul unmix'd
With aught of pity where its wrath had fix'd.

BYRON.

With how sad steps, O moon! thou climb'st the skies,
How silently and with how wan a face!

SIR P. SIDNEY.

THE departure of Bellegarde from Quebec, and the circumstances that attended it, were sufficient in themselves to afflict Matilda, without the secret apprehension that he might carry his threat against Bertinval into execution, ex-

pose himself to the penalty of the law, and the rigour of a government both jealous and vindictive. Her apprehensions were increased by the reports that circulated in the city, that orders had been sent to the military commander at Montreal, to make use of every means in his power to arrest and bring the fugitive to head-quarters. Father Leclerc disavowed, in the name of Matilda, the act of violence her favourite had committed on the persons of the officers of the law, who sought to arrest him, and at the same time urged, in mitigation of the offence, his youth, inexperience, and ignorance of the laws. She went so far as to wait upon the governor, accompanied by the priest, and besought him to forgive the young Indian, whose influence with his tribe might render it impolitic to punish him with severity. Sir Crowdie piqued himself on his gallantry, and

pleased with this mark of homage rendered by youth and beauty to a haughty old bachelor, promised her every thing she solicited. Delighted at having served her partisan, for whom she felt a most sincere friendship, she returned to the inn, to make preparations to set out for her castle.

The secretary, learning the success of her application to his master, and anxious to conciliate the future spouse of his confidential agent, now heir to the fortune and title of the house of Argenteuil, came to make his court and excuses for the ungracious reception he had formerly given her, laying his conduct on that occasion, to the account of his official duties, and the exigency of the times.

Although Matilda was not the dupe of this wily hypocrite, she treated him with that politeness which comported with her own dignity,

and the desire she felt to deprecate the vengeance of a man who had the power and inclination to injure Bellegarde. The promises of the governor did not quiet her apprehensions for her favourite's safety. The secretary remained his enemy, and could employ the strong arm of the law, to punish him for having attempted the life and dangerously wounded two of its officers. Her imagination pictured the youth, whose only crime was an enthusiastic love of her, and of whatever might interest her safety and happiness, in the hands of justice, treated with all the humiliation and severity of a common felon ; bound, fettered in prison, and exposed to an ignominious punishment. So strong were her fears, that they deprived her of rest, and alarmed the good priest on account of her health, which recent events had entirely deprived of its former strength. All these

apprehensions were soon appeased by the following letter, which reached Quebec before she had set forth on her journey.

“ The dark adder that had so long lain coiled in the bosom of my benefactors and friends is now harmless. He stung to death the revered protector of my youth ; but my beloved mistress is safe, and Bellegarde is the happy instrument of her emancipation from the hands of an enemy who would not have spared her. I have crushed the head that was plotting mischief, and paid the debt I had incurred to the house of Argenteuil. I have left brothers among the Algonquins, who will supply my place, should a new enemy rise out of the ashes of him who has fallen by my hand. Upon the faithful performance of that condition, peace will reign between the Red Men of the Lake of

the Mountains and those of Ontario. In an hour of common danger, I gave the hand of friendship to De Courcy. Should he contribute to the happiness of her whom I served, I shall rejoice at having twice saved him from death.

“ My career among the white men is closed. New duties call me hence, more worthy of, though less pleasing to the hereditary chief of the Ontario nation.

“ BELLEGARDE.”

Tears of genuine affection and gratitude moistened the paper on which these words were traced. The priest crossed himself, and prayed for the soul of the guilty man, who had fallen into the snare he had set for the destruction of his family, and “ gone to his account with all his sins upon his head !”

Matilda, accompanied by the priest, returned to the castle of Argenteuil, which, with all its vast domains, became exclusively her own, in consequence of the death of her cousin. There she long continued to mourn the loss of her beloved father; and often in her prayers for the repose of his departed spirit, were mingled supplications for the safety of De Courcy, whose faith and affection she never doubted, although she could neither account for his long absence, or the silence he had observed towards her since Bellegarde had left him at his post on the borders of Lake Champlain. She had now replaced Bellegarde by a foster-brother, who presented himself in the name of that beloved and faithful friend, and with such a recommendation obtained a ready entrance into her service. This young man she sent to the post where Bellegarde had left Eustace, about that

time when the old baron was carried to prison, and troubles thickened over the family at the castle. The only tidings she could obtain was, that Eustace had disappeared suddenly with his dog and gun, and had not since been heard of. Matilda, disenchanted with the world at an age when its hopes and enjoyments generally unfold themselves, now only sought repose and solitude. Religion imposed as a duty that resignation which she now courted as a necessity ; and had her aunt not stood in need of her society and affection, she would have retired to a convent, and taken the veil.

Eustace, ignorant of the misfortunes that had visited his friends, and languishing with “hope long delayed,” received with corresponding delight that freedom which the friendly interposition of Colonel Roberdeau had obtained for him. He was no longer a pri-

somer; he was indebted for his liberty to a brave and generous enemy; and his gratitude was, perhaps, the highest emotion of pleasure he ever felt. The esteem he had conceived for the worthy and generous American, in whose family he had been cherished and consoled during his captivity, had been warmed into an affection that made their separation painful. His was not one of those vulgar souls, whose pride renders them ungrateful, or whose vanity furnishes a pretext, to close the heart against the lasting impressions of kindness and the recollection of benefits received in time of need; and when he pledged his word of honour not to draw his sword during the war against the country of his benefactor, his promise was seconded by his warmest sympathies in the cause of a people, among whom he had lived more like a brother than an enemy.

Roberdeau was touched with the gratitude of his protégé ; and his warm patriotism only required, in return for the services he had rendered, that Eustace should do as much for such American prisoners, as the fortune of war had placed in the hands of the British troops.

" I have been fortunate enough," said the brave man, " to have obliged many persons in the course of my life ; many have forgotten me ; but those who thought to deprive me of the recompence of their affection, were not aware that nothing can obliterate the satisfaction of having performed a kind action."

Roberdeau conducted his young friend to the borders of Lake Champlain, where he procured a boat to convey him to the opposite shore. Eustace was received with joy by the garrison, which he found under the command of an officer, whom he had known at Montreal;

and who recommended him to lose no time in proceeding to head-quarters, to render an account of his long absence, and the engagement he had taken not to serve against the Americans. But a more interesting object than either his justification or his military duties hastened his departure; more especially as Bellegarde had never returned with an answer to his letter to Matilda. He set out for the Lake of the Two Mountains, and on the second day reached the village of St. Ann. Here he learned from the clergy of the Missionary Church, the events that had occurred during his absence.

The history of Bertinval was no longer a secret; and the pious fathers spoke of his sudden death, and the enormity of his sins, with a mysterious reserve, as if his spirit were a suffering witness of the tale. A large wooden cross, they said, had been erected upon the spot where

he fell, which is never approached after twilight by the people of the surrounding country; and the Canadian boatmen, as they pass before it, rest their paddles, pull off their caps, make a sign of the cross, and repeat a short prayer for the repose of his soul, which none of them believes to have reached Paradise. All these distressing events had taken place within the short period of fourteen months!

“ Such,” said the good fathers, “ is the wisdom of Providence, to prove to the happiest of mortals, that the hours of illusion are short, and that the lightning rives the strongest and fairest tree of the forest.”

He next ventured to inquire about Matilda, and his emotion became visible as he learned that her health had suffered so much from the repeated shocks it had received, that for some months she had ceased to visit the Grey Sisters,

or make her customary orisons before the iron cross. This was the more remarkable, that her only walk had long been as far as the sign of her religion, where she came every day, and after some time, passed in an attitude of devotion, retraced her steps to the castle.

De Courcy's heart seemed to die within his bosom as he listened to the friar. A mixture of confused and obscure colours floated before his eyes, and he remained during some minutes insensible to every thing around him ; the paleness of death was cast over his countenance ; a cold dew had covered his noble forehead, and he felt as if he were sinking into the tomb ! The priest ran for a renovating cordial, and after chafing his temples, saw with delight large tears trickling down his cheeks. Prolonged and deep sighs escaped from his bosom ; and when he attempted to rally and stand up,

he sank, feeble and exhausted, on his chair. The pious and sympathizing brothers conveyed him to a chamber and left him to repose, while a messenger was sent to the castle to request the immediate presence of Father Leclerc. The good man hastened to the house of the missionaries, and a short explanation was sufficient to convince him of the true cause of the sudden indisposition of his young friend. His encouraging looks, and out-stretched arms, revived De Courcy, who could only articulate these words :—“ Does she live, reverend father ? ”

“ She lives, my son,” said the priest, “ and her affection for you is unchanged. Would to heaven I could say as much of the brilliant health in which you left her. But be comforted ; your presence will do her much good. Repose yourself while I go and prepare her to receive you. I would willingly postpone until

to-morrow your meeting; your pale face and altered figure might alarm her. You also have suffered, my son."

" My sufferings, good father, are trifling in comparison with the sorrows and affliction of those I love. I have been ill in mind and body, but hope had buoyed me up, until I learned the sad fate of the family of Argenteuil, and remarked the cautious and discouraging manner of the missionary, who spoke of the state of Matilda's health. De Courcy then gave a brief account of his capture by the Americans, his anxiety and distress, and release through the intervention of Colonel Roberdeau."

When Father Leclerc related the circumstances of Bertinval's conduct and death, De Courcy exclaimed, "O my brave Bellegarde; thy virtues are above all praise, and thy faults, if indeed thou hast any, are inseparable from

the superfluity of thy noble qualities. Great and generous spirit, what an immeasurable debt of gratitude I owe to thee!"

The two friends separated for the night, and Father Leclerc returned to the castle, with the glad tidings of De Courcy's presence at the village. He took care to explain minutely to the proud and susceptible Matilda the cause of her lover's long silence, and the effect she would not fail to remark of absence and affliction on his person.

If human life can offer one position in which the "sunshine of the soul" glows with unmixed brightness, it is that where love creates and adorns a new world peopled by two persons, like De Courcy and Matilda at this moment.— A single being is for each one of them the universe entire; fortune, talent, fame, honour, virtue, seem to have no merit than as they con-

tribute to please the object beloved. In its absence we count minutes as hours and days as years.

Thus felt De Courcy as he watched the shades of night passing sluggishly before his unclosed eye-lids, and as he hailed the dawn, that was to light his path to the dwelling of Matilda. Why has Providence planted thorns in that path; why fatten the victim to make the sacrifice greater? He entered the castle with a beating heart; he interrogated the looks of every one he met; the lips of the domestics smiled at his approach, but sorrow sat on their brow. The cause could not be mistaken; Matilda was not better. The joy occasioned by the sudden arrival of a lover she had almost considered as lost, had increased a fever, that had long wasted her lovely and delicate frame, and the hand she presented to him burned and

desiccated, announced the dangerous state of her malady. He moistened it with his tears as he pressed it to his lips. Her eyes beamed with a fearful lustre, while the hectic glow on her cheek, but too plainly indicated the disease with which nature struggled. It was

CONSUMPTION.

“ LOVER, do not trust her eyes,
When they sparkle most she die !
Mother, do not trust her breath,
Comfort she will breathe in death !
Father, do not strive to save her,
She is mine, and I must have her !
The coffin must be her bridal bed ;
The winding-sheet must wrap her head ;
The whispering winds must o'er her sigh,
For soon in the grave the maid must lie.”

K. White.

CHAPTER XII

From those bright regions of eternal day,
Where now thou shin'st amongst thy fellow saints,
Array'd in purer light, look down on me !
In pleasing visions and assuasive dreams,
O ! soothe my soul and teach me how to lose thee.

Irene.

“ WHILE there is life there is hope,” saith the proverb, and Eustace was not so skilled in physic as to be able to measure the danger of his beloved and betrothed Matilda. What he wished to be true, love counselled him to hope ; and as this cruel and incurable malady wastes life by slow degrees, in which there are many bright

and flattering moments, he fondly reposed on the belief, that her youth and good constitution would in time subdue it. Time went on its course, however, without increasing his confidence ; and, in a moment of grief and despair, he asked the priest why Providence exposed itself to be interrogated by suffering virtue ; why it gave every blessing only to crush the possessor to elementary dust in the dawn of life, without any visible use, except that of awaking sorrow, and exciting painful sympathy ? “ What,” said he in moments of despondency, has Matilda done to merit so early a death ? what wilful offence have I committed, to be thus punished in the outset of life ? ”

“ If I were to answer your questions,” said the priest, “ you would lead me into a field of speculation too vast for my feeble intelligence. If divine justice held its tribunal upon earth,

we should see every day the great account balanced between man and his Supreme Judge. Virtue would receive its recompence, vice would be punished, and the miserable globe we inhabit would become a theatre, on which the infinite and immeasurable operations of the Almighty would be parodied: this existence would cease to be what the Creator intended it should be—a passage from birth to eternal life; a scene of probation, of hopes and fears; a problem, if you will, of which the solution is reserved for a future state, and known only to supreme wisdom. If you abandon this view of human life—if you limit man's great destiny to a few days, months, or years, it is impossible to conjecture for what purpose we are born, to what end we are endowed with reason and moral feeling, passions, and desires, constantly struggling within us. Nothing, my dear friend, can au-

thorize us to adopt the common cant of narrow-minded moralists, whose dramatic machinery is productive of fixed and determined results, composed of shreds and patches, in which we see constancy and love rewarded by a happy marriage; integrity and talents raised to eminence, and surrounded by consideration and power; patience, industry, and economy, paid with riches, health, and tranquillity. Such are not the purposes of divine wisdom in the creation of man, or else vice could not triumph, nor virtue languish in obscurity. The being on whom you have fixed your affections, has at an early hour reached that perfection, that fits her for eternal happiness; and if it please her divine Master to shorten her passage, your duty is to bow the head in humility, and resign yourself to that, which is not merely right in itself, but inevitable. It would be little less than blas-

phemy to suppose that heaven rewards and punishes on this earth ; since innocence that perishes on the scaffold, crime that triumphs, the inequality of conditions, the prosperity of the few, the wretchedness of the many, would, with all their train of horrible incongruity, be imputable to infinite justice, goodness, and wisdom !”

Eustace could only answer with tears ; his heart was too much agitated to allow him the use of his reason. He was only certain of one thing, and that was that a higher degree of affliction would deprive him of all power to console and comfort Matilda. When he appeared before her, his voice, his looks, were the eloquent interpreters of his anguish ; and although he made great efforts to conceal his feelings, it was too evident to Matilda, that despair had laid her hand upon him. For his sake alone

she wished to live ; but as she was sensible that Providence had ordered it otherwise, she resolved to convince her lover that it would be unworthy of them both to pass the little time that remained to them, in a state of affectation, flattering each other with false hopes.

“ You perceive, my dearest friend,” said she, “ that my malady is incurable ; you cannot resign yourself to the will of heaven ; and yet I am convinced you love me for my own sake. Now, be persuaded that the only regret I have in quitting life, is that of leaving you alone. Come and sit by me, and hear what I have to say on this painful topic. How much reason have I to thank God, that He abridges an existence, which has commenced with so much trouble and calamity ! I die in the midst of affection, fresh blooming like the flowers of spring, shedding their perfume on

my senses; is it preferable to wait until they be withered and decayed? If life be a blessing, so happy an exit is the consummation of it ; if an evil, it cannot too soon finish. The longer our journey, the more we are fatigued, and the greater number of accidents we meet on the way. The cypress you will plant near my tomb and water with your tears, will be dearer to my departed spirit than the garland my fancy has seen you weave for the brow of your destined bride. I might lose you by sudden death ; your enthusiastic love might sink into sober indifference ; and when youth and beauty had fled, they would probably leave us both in that reasonable state called friendship, which compared with your present feelings, would be cold, positive, and insipid. Now I escape from the common fate of lovers accompanied with all that can console, charm, and

embellish my last hour ! We shall meet hereafter, De Courcy, never to separate ; let us not darken with unavailing sorrow the few days or hours we have now to pass together. I have many wishes which you only can accomplish. I consider you as my husband, and claim your protection for those of my kindred who survive me. My aunt will adopt the orphan of my guilty cousin. The child, as you have learned from Father Leclerc, was left by its unfortunate mother, when she came to Canada to seek her husband, and is now dependant on the charity of a stranger. My aunt, Bellegarde, Father Leclerc, are amply provided for in the distribution of my fortune, of which you, my dearest friend, are the sole administrator. Such other dispositions as my testament contains, it is now unnecessary to enumerate. My task is finished," said the angelic girl, with a

smile of satisfaction ; “ let us talk of you and your projects. While you remain a solitary wanderer on this troubled scene, time will seem heavy and life irksome ; employ it, then, dear Eustace, in preparation for a better and more durable state ; and be well assured, that the exercise of virtue, while it gives reasonable hopes of eternal felicity, enables us to bear without murmuring and impenitence those evils and infirmities from which we cannot escape here below.”

Eustace made no reply ; he pressed her head to his beating heart, and in silent supplication implored heaven to enable him to comfort her while living, and discharge in a manner worthy of her, the mission she left him to execute after her death. He promised implicit obedience to every thing she could wish, declared that his life should be spent with the

sole view of rendering himself worthy of joining her in a future life; and from that moment his resolution was taken, to resign himself to her loss, and follow her by the shortest and surest road that his moral and religious inspirations might point out. From that moment the storm of affliction ceased, and peace entered his bosom. He watched over her day and night, cheered her on, identified himself with all her pains and pleasures, and until her last sigh was quietly breathed in an expression of tenderness to him, as the pressure of her hand bade adieu, he showed no sign of grief, nor disturbed the tranquillity of her mind by any outward testimony of the profound and withering sorrow to which he yielded himself without reserve.

While the walls of the castle echoed with the wailings of grief, the eye of De Courcy

was dry, and his lips sealed; not a sigh, not a murmur escaped from him; he continued to hold her hand until the chill of death made it feel like marble. His eyes remained fixed on her pale yet lovely face, on which the smile she cast on him as her eye-lids fell, still remained. No attempt was made to remove him until the closing evening cast its shadows over her couch, and every object became invisible. It was during these few and silent hours, that De Courcy seemed to commune with her spirit, and receive from it those inspirations that traced the path he resolved to follow to the end of his journey through life.

There is a man in every parish where the mild lights of Christianity have penetrated, who is the principal agent in all the solemn acts of life, who invokes the blessing of heaven on the child as soon as it is old enough to receive

the first sacrament, and continues his friend, his counsellor and comforter to the verge of the tomb; a man, whose divine mission makes him alike familiar with the rich and the poor, the saint and the profligate; a man, who can scarce be said to belong to any rank in society, and yet is the equal of every man from the prince to the peasant. This man is the village curate; and, according to the manner with which he discharges his duty, no man in society can do so much good or so much evil. Of this important class, no one was more zealous, enlightened, and sincere than Father Leclerc; and in the state of mind in which Eustace found himself, none could speak consolation to him with the same authority. He removed him to a distant chamber, and instead of pouring maxims of frigid stoicism into his ear, left him alone, with the simple admonition,

to remember that invisible witnesses expected to find him resigned to the will of Heaven.

If the heart of Eustace had one fibre in it that could vibrate to any new touch of hope, joy, or pleasure, he had before him an ample field. He was young in years though old in sorrow; possessed every personal advantage that could please, and every quality that could captivate. With the exception of special legacies, Matilda had given him by her testament all her fortune; but he had lost all that could make life supportable. The death of Matilda had fixed the seal of misfortune on his destiny, and nothing could remove it. In vain would he oppose to the inexorable decree of fate, all the combinations of a soul desirous of happiness, all the powers of a mind highly gifted, all the projects that an ardent and fertile imagination could suggest: he could

struggle with disappointment, arm himself with patience and circumspection, change his abode, call Heaven to aid virtuous intentions, and invoke the sympathy and consolation of parents and friends,—nothing could comfort him. The sun of his sublunary happiness was set, never more to beam one ray of light upon him. Every step he could take served only to give him a nearer view of the dark and desolate path that led towards the tomb that concealed from him the only treasure he valued. “Religion,” said he, “may lend me a torch that will light me on my way, and henceforth I devote myself to its service.” In what manner he carried this resolution into effect, our reader will find in the opening scene of our history.

FATHER ANATOLE, DIRECTOR OF THE ABBEY OF ROYAUMONT WAS EUSTACE DE COURCY; Madame de Belrose, the inhabitant of the Cha-

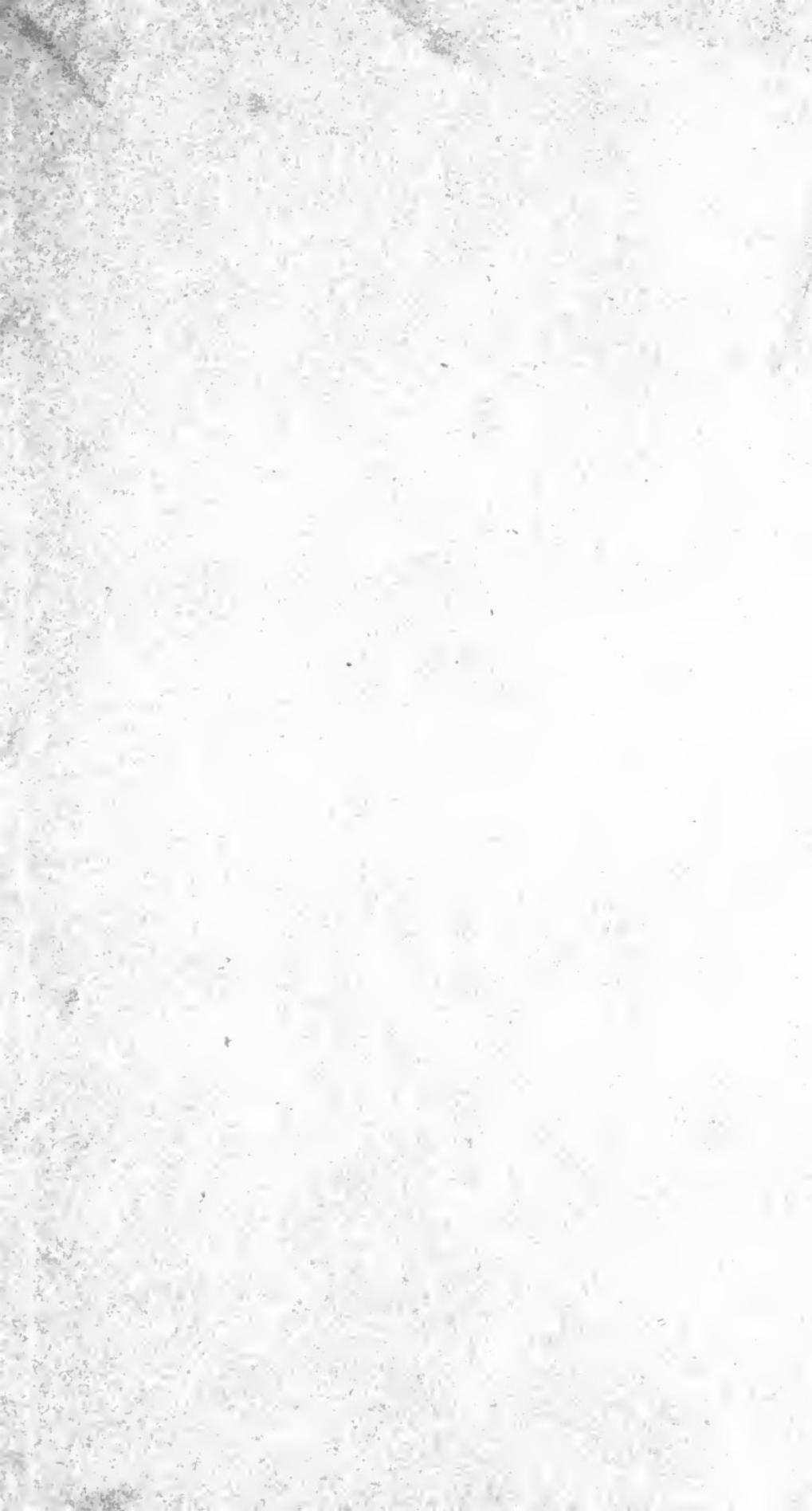
teau de Buillon; and the boy whom she adopted, and to whose education Father Anatole devoted such time as he could spare from the duties of his monastery, the son of Bertinval, who had been left by his unfortunate mother at the humble boarding-house at Chelsea.

THE END.

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610



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